THE BALFOURIAN PARLIAMENT

1900-1905

HENRY W. LUCY

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THE BALFOURIAN PARLIAMENT
1900-1905

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THE BALFOURIAN PARLIAMENT

1900-1905

By HENRY W. LUCY

Illustrated by
E. T. REED and PHIL MAY
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To

THE RIGHT HON.

JAMES WILLIAM LOWTHER,

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

THESE NOTES OF THE PARLIAMENT
THAT CALLED HIM TO THE CHAIR
ARE DEDICATED WITH PROFOUND
ESTEEM.

SPECIAL ATTENTION IS DIRECTED TO RULE 8.

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PREFACE

THE Parliament whose record is covered by this volume, was less fruitful of picturesque incident than were some of its predecessors. Handicapped by an overwhelming Ministerial majority, weakened by internal dissensions, the Opposition were, up to the final Session, more acquiescent than aggressive.

Opportunity of describing personal incidents and dramatic scenes failing, the student of Parliamentary history and manners may find some interest in tracing the course of events consequent on Mr. Chamberlain's departure on his Fiscal Campaign in May 1903. Such value as the story may have is mainly based on the fact that it is related without political bias.

This is the sixth volume of a Diary dating back to the opening of the Parliament which in 1874 found Disraeli in power as well as in office. The series completes the narrative of an eye-witness, who has had the rare advantage of being present (with the exception of two Sessions) at every sitting of Parliament through thirty-one epoch-making years.

The Dissolution of 1906 seems a fitting opportunity for adding *Finis* to the multitudinous notes of things seen and heard.

I have to thank my Friend and Colleague, E. T. Reed, for illuminating the book with portraits which, like the letterpress, were done on the spot. My warm acknowledgments are also due to the proprietors of *Punch* for permission to use the illustrations, including a few from the pencil of the prince of black and white, the late Phil May. Messrs. Vacher kindly allow me to embody in the Diary their invaluable Calendar of Business Done.

Reform Club, March 1906.

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QUEEN VICTORIA'S LAST PARLIAMENT

CHAPTER I

SESSION 1900

The War Session.—Election of Speaker.—Black Rod Again.—The Reconstructed Ministry.—"Cad!"—"Labby" and "Joe."—How Ministerial Offices are Shuffled.—Forewarned but not Forearmed.—"Don't Keir Hardie."—The War Session.—Tim Healy and his Brethren.

Dec. 3. The War Session.

THE rush of members, new and old, on the opening day of the fifteenth and as it proved the last Parliament of Queen Victoria was so great that the absence of the Irish members, who are under command from Mr. W. O'Brien to abstain from attendance through the preliminary session, was not noticed.

At five minutes past two the principal doorkeeper, advancing to the Bar, announced Black Rod. Enter that dignitary in scarlet uniform, carrying a plumed cap, and making obeisance to the empty chair. Since Sir Michael Biddulph, newly come to the office of Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, stood paralysed at the Table of the House of Commons, his message only half delivered, his appearance on the scene has ever had exceptional interest. This afternoon he got along very well as far as the passage in his message from the Lords Commissioners "desiring the presence of this honourable House." Here he stopped, and it seemed probable that a veteran who served with distinction through the Crimean War, fronting death at Alma, Balaclava, Inkerman, and the Siege of Sebastopol, would ignominiously collapse in the

trenches before the Table of the House of Commons. With a mighty effort he recovered his cue, and completed the invitation "there to hear the Royal Commission read."

Perhaps Black Rod was flustered by the action of members on both sides, who, at his entrance, removed their hats. Sir William Harcourt, who knows better, kept his on. The fact is hats are (or should be) removed only when a direct message from the Sovereign is brought to the Bar.

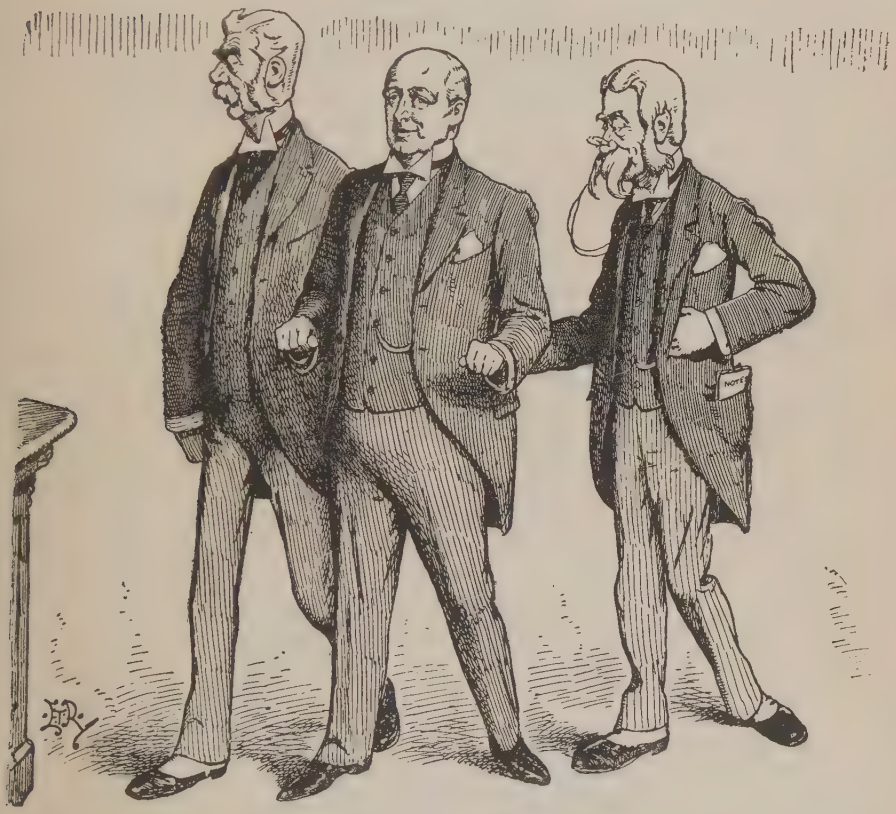
Election of Speaker.

When members—chiefly the new contingent—came back from witnessing the poor performance in the House of Lords, they found a desirable change in the aspect of the Chamber. The welcome gaslight from the glass roof flooded it. Otherwise, in spite of high spirits and good fellowship, it looked dark in the drear December day. A slight pause followed the re-seating of members. Newcomers, keenly observant, perceived the wigged and gowned clerk—the right-hand man of the three seated at the Table—dumbly pointing his finger at a spot behind the Treasury Bench. Evidently in response, Sir James Fergusson rose, and began his speech proposing the re-election of Mr. Gully to what Mr. Arthur Balfour described as the loftiest place to which an inhabitant of these islands can aspire.

This performance illustrates another of the quaint customs of the Mother of Parliaments. There being at this moment no Speaker elected, the meeting was without a president. Some one must take the lead, and the lot falls to the Clerk at the Table. But not being a duly elected member, he may not open his mouth, even to say James Fergusson. Accordingly he, with extended forefinger, dabs first at the member who proposes the election of the Speaker, next at the seconder of the motion, and, finally, with increased

force—for this is his last opportunity—at the Speaker-Elect. In response to the mute signal each rises in turn.

The Speaker-Elect having, in the accustomed



Escorting the Speaker-Elect.

phrase, humbly submitted himself to the judgment of the House, Sir James Fergusson, crossing the House led him to the Chair, escorted by Dr. Farquharson. The Leader of the House rose to offer his congratulations. Their evidently unaffected fervour was pos-

sibly fed by flame of recollection that it had once been Mr. Balfour's duty to do all he could to prevent Mr. Gully's first election to the Chair.

One passage in his speech struck a lofty note. "There is," he said, "a spirit that presides over this assembly which is something more than any rule, which no manipulation of your Standing Orders will create if you have it not. That spirit has survived the shock of factions, great constitutional changes, immense extensions of the suffrage, and inevitable changes in the political forces which the Empire obeys. That spirit has survived all these changes untouched and untarnished."

Dec. 4. Black Rod Again.

Whilst the performance of swearing in was in full fling and the table crowded with members waiting to take the oath, the House was startled by a cry of "Black Rod!" As the Speaker had half an hour earlier returned from the other House, where he presented himself for Royal confirmation of his election, this incursion created some amazement. There were cries of "No, no" from the crowd at the table. But Black Rod is a man-at-arms. The House of Lords is not yet disestablished. After some hesitation, the crowd parted. Black Rod, marching up to the table, again summoned "this honourable House" to wait on the Lords Commissioners.

The Speaker, this time accompanied by the Mace, thither repairing, received a further message from the Queen, authorizing the immediate issue of writs. In accordance with this gracious permission, just before the rising of the House at four o'clock, Sir William Walrond moved the issue of writs for elections to fill the vacancies created by acceptance of Ministerial office.

This second summons by Black Rod, though a

matter of rare occurrence, is strictly in accordance with precedent. Until the Speaker and a quorum of the House of Commons are sworn in, the House is not constituted, and may not be recognized as an authority competent to move the issue of writs. It being desirable that the re-election of Ministers who have vacated their seats shall be completed as early as possible, arrangements were made whereby, as soon as information reached the Lord Chancellor that a quorum had been sworn in, Black Rod was dispatched to summon the House of Commons to receive the necessary authority.

Dec. 5. The Reconstructed Ministry.

Mr. George Christopher Trout Bartley has never been the same since; of three men grinding at the mill, one was taken and two were left. A devout man, a steady church-goer, he is not disposed to quarrel with, even to criticise, scriptural axioms. But their application is quite a different matter. Every one is free to make his own. With respect to this particular text Mr. Bartley does not see why five years ago, at the end of a Parliament through which he, Mr. Hanbury, and Mr. Gibson Bowles had sedulously worked to bring in a Conservative Ministry, Mr. Hanbury should have been made Financial Secretary to the Treasury, whilst he, not to mention Mr. Bowles, was left out in the cold.

Worse things have since happened. The Ministry of 1895 has been reconstructed. Mr. Hanbury has gone up higher, being placed at the head of a department with a seat in the Cabinet. It is true that the department selected was precisely the one of which he knew least, and with which he might be expected to have the minimum of sympathy. But Mr. Hanbury is a man who usually finds his way about. Before he has been a week at the Board of Agriculture he will

know the difference between an ox and a heifer, and will sturdily trudge on to even higher branches of knowledge.

It seemed the most natural thing in the world that the post in the Ministry to which he was originally designated being thus vacated, one of his two comrades left grinding at the mill should be invited to fill it. But no. Family influence made itself felt. The pitiful tendency of Lord Salisbury to yield to the demands of those insatiable Liberal Unionists prevailed. A rare chance of accomplishing an act of justice and conciliation was thrown away.

Opportunity abounded in other directions. After the manner of family groups sleighing over the steppes of wildest Russia pursued by wolves, Mr. Powell Williams, one of the plumpest of the junior children of the Ministry, was thrown out to them. Mr. Chaplin, even whilst drafting a new Bill, designed to keep his memory green at the Local Government Board, received notice of dismissal. Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman described to a sympathetic House how Sir Matthew White Ridley came to leave the Home Office. He, though in the plenitude of his powers, felt the cares of office too much for him. He had nothing to reproach himself with. Personally popular, no official act had brought upon him the opprobrium that is the common lot of Home Secretaries. With the skill of a born artist the Leader of the Opposition suggested a picture of Sir Matthew surrounded by his colleagues in the Cabinet, whilst the Prime Minister besought him, in the name of his Queen and his country, to reconsider his position and stay on at the Home Office. He went, and a succession of consequent changes supervened.

How were they filled up? By rewarding men who had borne the heat and burden of the fight, who had scorned delights and lived laborious days in order

to establish Lord Salisbury in power? Alack! no. The Premier is, as Lord Rosebery delicately puts it, the head of a family having a most remarkable genius for administration. The Spartan woman gave all her sons to her country. The Marquis of Salisbury, not to be outdone in patriotism, adds his nephews.

How Ministerial Offices are Shuffled.

Even good Unionists resent the appointment of the Premier's younger nephew to the Presidency of the Board of Trade. I hear from a private, well-informed source explanation of what on the face of it certainly is unaccountable. The development of affairs is traced back to unexpected obstinacy on the part of the Duke of Devonshire. Not many months ago, his Grace, at a public meeting, gave what was accepted as an intimation of desire and intention to retire from official life.

Lord Salisbury, faced by the necessity of reconstructing his Government, was fully prepared to meet the emergency. Nephew Gerald, after honest and arduous endeavours to kill Home Rule by kindness, confessed himself beaten, and protested that his health, always delicate, would not stand the strain of a renewed term of office as Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. A scholar, rather than a man of business, more a Don than head of a Government Department, the Education Office was the very place for him. The Duke of Devonshire was confidentially approached with the suggestion that he might seek the rest he had diligently earned. An unexpected obstacle presented itself. The Duke didn't want to go, and in these circumstances other provision had to be made for Gerald.

In the end, Sir Matthew White Ridley was removed from the Home Office, Mr. Ritchie went thither from the Board of Trade, where he has done conspicuously

good work, and Mr. Gerald Balfour was made President of the Board of Trade.

Dec. 6. "Cad!"

Debate on Address. On the whole dull, it momentarily blazed up whilst Mr. Chamberlain was speaking in the risky hour between eleven o'clock and midnight. During the General Election the Colonial Secretary contributed to its literature a letter from Mr. John Ellis to a correspondent in South Africa in which he expressed warm sympathy with the Boers. Mr. Ellis now explained that the letter was written some time before the outbreak of war.

"The hon. gentleman," said Mr. Chamberlain, "has related some of the facts connected with the correspondence, but has withheld a full account. I will tell the truth."

"For the first time," responded a voice from below the gangway opposite.

"Cad!" the Colonial Secretary retorted, in what was meant for an aside, but resounded through the House.

Amid loud murmurs from the Opposition Mr. Dalziel asked whether it was permissible for a member to accuse another of being a cad. The Speaker judiciously replied that if such expression were used it would be disorderly. Mr. Chamberlain, regaining his composure, said he used the word under provocation, having been charged with telling the truth for the first time. He withdrew the offensive expression.

Dec. 7. "Labby" and "Joe."

The appearance of the House at five o'clock to-night did not point to peace either in South Africa or Westminster. Mr. Labouchere was on his legs, extolling the electioneering genius of the Colonial Secretary. There was a pretty full audience, new members, their withers yet un-

wrung, not being disposed to lose any "turn" in the night's entertainment. The Tory wing of the Unionist party, though properly grateful for the incalculable services Mr. Chamberlain has rendered them, are not beyond the temptation to enjoy a little baiting of their redoubtable champion.

Mr. Labouchere did his best to set the heather ablaze. At the outset Mr. Chamberlain, shunning temptation, left the House, Mr. Labouchere's darts striking an almost empty Treasury Bench. On second thoughts, avoiding appearance of flight, he returned, but ostentatiously disdained semblance of listening to his smiling tormentor. He placed on his knee a sheet of foolscap of the kind on which the Leader of the House "presents his humble duty to the Queen" and reports to Her Majesty how matters have fared through the current sitting. Mr. Labouchere, went on in provocative mood. But he got no glance in reply, much less a word of retort. When Mr. Chamberlain had finished his letter he took up a blue book, and holding it close to his face steadily read on.

"Steadily read on."

Regarded from the effect wrought this was a reply to the enemy infinitely more hurtful than would have been the most scathing retort. Unconsciously Mr. Chamberlain had taken a leaf out of the book of military tactics of the Boers. Often it has happened that British guns sweeping unseen, probably empty, trenches have for hours been left

without response. Thus Mr. Labouchere wasted his ammunition, and the Colonial Secretary, not a penny the worse for the bombardment, reserved his. What might in other circumstances have turned out a lively interlude, occupying the greater part of the sitting, fizzled out with Mr. Labouchere's speech.

Dec. 10. Forewarned but not Forearmed.

When a confiding public were first awakened to the fact that Her Majesty's Government, ignorant of, or under-rating, the resources of the Boers, was wofully unprepared for war in South Africa, questions were naturally asked in Parliament as to what the Intelligence Department had been doing. This branch of the Service occupies towards the War Office the position of scouts attached to a column in a hostile country. What was the use of Intelligence Departments if they had no intelligence to convey?

To-night I met at dinner Sir John Ardagh, head of the department. He spoke quite freely on the subject. He assured me that for four years preceding the outbreak of war his staff kept close observation upon Mr. Kruger's agents on the Continent. They had precise particulars of every gun delivered to the order of the Transvaal Government. They knew the probable number of burghers who would take the field, knowledge confirmed by the event. They also noted and recorded the steady influx of foreign mercenaries waiting the word to fall to. In July of last year, earlier warnings being disregarded, a formal communication was made for the consideration of the Cabinet, advising the despatch of a large force fully equipped, estimated to be sufficient to safeguard Natal and Cape Colony from the first on-rush of the Boers.

As we know too well, nothing was done. When on October 12 in last year the Boers crossed the

frontier, they were confronted by 12,000 men, poorly armed. To make matters worse, this small force was broken up in two detachments. Four thousand stood for a while at Glencoe, soon to be swept away by the flood of Boer invasion; the remaining 8,000 were encamped at Ladysmith. If the Boers had carried out their original plan of campaign and marched straight on to the sea, nothing could have saved Durban and Cape Town.[1]

Dec. 13. "Don't Keir Hardie."

From the top bench below the gangway Mr. Keir Hardie looks down upon quite a thronged congregation. This favourable circumstance has doubtless something to do with the frequency of his speech. Since the new Parliament met he has oftener delivered two addresses in a sitting than he has been satisfied with working off one. They have not come to very much. Listening one wonders how this cheap fustian suits the mind of the sturdy British workman.

It should be said that there is nothing of the demagogue about Mr. Hardie's manner, or the delivery of his many speeches. Time that works many marvels seems to have laid a repressive hand on him. When he was first elected he came down to Westminster in one of those conveyances in which once a year the British workman goes to Epping Forest or other sylvan retreat to make gruesome holiday. A bodyguard shared the brake with him, the company including a gentleman with a trumpet and one with a trombone, individual independence being asserted even to the minute detail of distinctive keynotes.

To the opening meeting of the Fifteenth Parliament of the Queen Mr. Keir Hardie proceeded undistin-

[1] This statement, at the time incredible upon lesser authority, was confirmed and amplified by the publication three years later of evidence given before the War Commission.

guished, save for one thing, amid the herd who people a penny 'bus. The mark of distinction was a necktie. In his earlier Parliament notice was taken of the circumstance that he did not wear a necktie. This session he has been at pains to show that his former negligence in this respect was not due to poverty either of resources or of ideas. His necktie is of a kind the like of which was never seen on sea or land. In another element, the air, a rainbow presents a feeble resemblance. But if Mr. Keir Hardie's necktie and a rainbow were out together the latter would have its vaunted glories eclipsed.

Dec. 14. The War Session.

Those present in the House of Commons on February 13, 1892, when Mr. Gladstone introduced his Home Rule Bill, will not forget the burst of cheering that greeted the announcement that the Irish members were to be practically excluded from Westminster. Prospect of that happy deliverance for the moment almost made converts to Home Rule of members ranged under the leadership of Mr. Balfour. The fact that later this was the very portion of the Bill upon which attack was led by Mr. Chamberlain adds fresh interest to the episode. Through the last fortnight the House of Commons has had opportunity of considering how things would be at Westminster supposing an Irish Parliament were re-established in Dublin.

The resolution adopted at the instance of Mr. William O'Brien to abstain from attendance at Westminster during the War Session was designed as the severest punishment at the disposal of the Irish Party. On the whole it has been borne with equanimity. The House has a rare gift of adapting itself to changing circumstances. Finding itself in the unwonted position of being able to get along with its work without large slices of appointed time being appropriated for irrele-

vant and windy speeches it jogged quietly on, accomplishing in a fortnight what in advance had been expected to occupy fully three weeks. It is doubtful whether after the first night any one gave a thought to the statesmen engaged in rehearsal of proceedings in a Home Rule Parliament. The effect on the appearance of the House was decidedly favourable. The Irish members appropriate two benches below the gangway to the left of the Speaker. Having secured seats they do not think it necessary to occupy them. The consequence is that there are, through long stages of a sitting, desolate gaps below the gangway. In the brief Session which closes to-day these benches have been regularly filled. Ministerialists, elbowed out of their over-crowded quarters, crossed over whenever there was a chance vacancy and filled it. Thus the Chamber has maintained a comfortable appearance long foreign to it.

Tim Healy and his Brethren.

Members of reflective turn of mind have been disposed to make the most of the past fortnight of peaceful work. They know it is but the torrent's stillness ere it dash beneath. There is no ground for the wild hope that next Session the Irish members will renew the tactics that made the title "the War Session" a misnomer. To begin with, the tactics adopted led to profound disappointment. Whilst Mr. Swift MacNeill, Mr. Patrick O'Brien, Redmond, *cadet,* and other renowned Parliamentary orators, have been vainly trying to get in a word on the comparatively obscure platform of the Rotunda, Mr. Tim Healy has had the House of Commons all to himself. Herein Mr. O'Brien made one of those mistakes comparatively trifling in their consequences which throw doubt on his capacity as a leader. He publicly forbad Mr. Healy to attend the sittings of the opening Session of Parliament,

threatening him with vague but blood-curdling pains and penalties if he disobeyed. Of course Tim, at whatever expense or personal inconvenience, made a point of turning up at Westminster. He has had an extraordinarily good time, delivering a series of brilliant speeches before crowded, delighted audiences.

"How many asses were sent out?"

When he has not been on his legs growling a pithy speech corruscated with flashes of wit he has seized the opportunity to contribute a remark to somebody else's conversation. Thus when a Conservative member gravely questioned Mr. Powell Williams as to the number of horses and mules sent out to South Africa, Tim blandly inquired, "Is the right hon. gentleman able to state how many asses were sent out?" The House good-humouredly laughs: the papers report the little joke; and dearly beloved brethren who are spending the time shouting and shaking fists at each other in the Rotunda bitterly note that Tim has scored again.

Dec. 15. Parliament prorogued.

CALENDAR. FIRST SESSION—1900.

DECEMBER.

3. *Mon.*—Election of the Speaker. Re-election of *Mr. William Court Gully.*
4. *Tues.*—Her Majesty's approval of Mr. Speaker-Elect signified.
   The Speaker and Members take the Oath or Affirmation.
5. *Wed.*—Members take the Oath or Affirmation.
6. *Thur.*—H. M. Speech. Address.
7. *Fri.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, South African Settlement, *Mr. Emmott.* Withdrawn.
   Amendment, British Interests in China, *Mr. Joseph Walton.* Debate adjourned.
   Business of the House. Government Business. Motion, *Mr. Balfour.* Amendment, *Mr. Dalziel.* Division—For, 215. Against, 100. Main Question put and agreed to.
10. *Mon.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, British Interests in China, *Mr. Walton.* Withdrawn.
   Amendment, Cabinet and Government Appointments, *Mr. Bartley.* Division—For, 128. Against, 230.
   Amendment, Ministers of the Crown and Members Holding Office (Interest in Contracts), *Mr. Lloyd George.* Division—For, 127. Against, 269.
   Main Question put. Closure. Division—For, 265. Against, 23. Address agreed to.
11. *Tues.*—Supply: Army (Supplementary) Estimates, 1900–1901. *Mr. Brodrick's* Statement. Division—For, 284. Against, 8.
12. *Wed.*—Supply: Army (Supplementary) Estimates, 1900–1901. Resolutions agreed to.
   Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. First Reading.
   Supplemental War Loan (No. 2) Bill. First Reading.
13. *Thur.*—Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Second Reading.
   Supplemental War Loan (No. 2) Bill. Second Reading.

14. *Fri.*—Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Committee.
Supplemental War Loan (No. 2) Bill. Committee.
15. *Sat.*—Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Third Reading.
Supplemental War Loan (No. 2) Bill. Third Reading.
Prorogation.

KING EDWARD VII

CHAPTER II

SESSION 1901

The First Signature on the Roll.—Under which King?—A Hitch.—Condolence and Congratulation.—The Duke of Cambridge.—Funereal Oratory.—The King Opens Parliament.—Outraged Commoners.—A mad Rush.—Wasting Time.

Jan. 23. The first Signature on Roll.

THERE was a swiftness that almost took the breath away in hurrying King Edward VII on to the Throne. It seemed to be done almost in the pause that midway breaks the exclamations "The Queen is dead! Long live the King!" The majority of members of the House of Commons learned at breakfast this morning that Parliament was summoned for to-day. To many it was impossible to reach Westminster in time for the opening. The date of the new Session being a month ago definitely fixed for February 14, scores, including the Liberal Whip, seized the opportunity to get away to the Riviera. Others were further afield. Nevertheless, when at four o'clock this afternoon the Speaker, with solemn step, walked up the floor of the House, there was a surprisingly large muster upstanding to receive him.

Mr. Arthur Balfour, whose well-earned holiday has been broken in upon with excessive bustle, met with a mischance he much laments. Hurrying up from Osborne after the closing scene, he found much work

awaiting him in Downing Street. After attending the Privy Council, he looked in at the Treasury for a few minutes to bring up arrears, arriving breathless at the House of Commons to find the swearing-in had already commenced. His opportunity of being the first member after the Speaker to sign the Roll of the First Parliament of King Edward VII had fled.

He had reckoned without the Chaplain of the House. Prayers usually precede the commencement of business. Had the service taken place the Leader of the House would have been in good time to assert his precedence on the Roll. But though, since 1867, the ancient order of Dissolution of Parliament, automatically following on demise of the Crown has been abrogated, its functions lapse until members have taken the oath of allegiance to the new Sovereign. Thus, there being at four o'clock technically no House, there were no prayers, and in the absence of the Premier, Sir M. Hicks-Beach, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, signed the memorable Roll first, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, as Leader of the Opposition, coming second.

Under which King?

So closely were things run that up to within ten minutes of the meeting of the House there was dubiety as to the style of the Sovereign to whom allegiance was to be sworn. Under which King, Albert I, or Edward VII? The form of oath was prepared and printed on a dozen forms. A blank was left to fill in the name of the King. From half-past three to ten minutes to four a perturbed figure was observed pacing the inner lobby. It was the Clerk of the Public Bill Office, wondering whether he would have to write in Albert or Edward.

Anxiety relieved by the arrival of a messenger from St. James's Palace, he hurried off to complete

the formula of the Oath. For members other than Privy Councillors who, gathered in the Banqueting Hall of St. James's Palace, heard the King declare for the name Edward, "which has been borne by six of my ancestors," the first news came from the Speaker. Rising from the Chair, Mr. Gully called upon members to take the Oath of Allegiance to "His Majesty King Edward VII."

There was a low murmur of pleasure at this announcement. A rumour was current that the Queen, desiring to perpetuate the memory of her ever-loved Consort, had enjoined the Prince of Wales to take the name of Albert when he succeeded to the Monarch's estate. His Majesty's explanation to the Privy Council of the reasons which guided his choice was marked by his familiar tact. He must have been aware of the prevalent popular desire that he should carry on the name not least illustrious amongst the catalogue of kings of England. Possibly he had in mind his revered mother's desire that the name of Albert should be endowed with Royal state.

"I do not undervalue the name of Albert," the King said in Privy Council, "which I inherit from my ever-to-be-lamented great and wise father, who, by universal consent, is, I think, deservedly, known by the name of Albert the Good, and I desire that his name should stand alone."

Therefore, Lords and Commoners hurriedly assembled at Westminster swore to be faithful, and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Edward the Seventh, his heirs and successors, according to law. So help them God.

The brief speech addressed to the Privy Council was carefully drawn up in advance, and committed to memory by the King. One of the audience tells me there was in the delivery no sign of formality. When His Majesty alluded to "the death of my beloved

mother the Queen," he faltered and seemed as if he would break down. Recovering himself by gallant effort, he went on to the end, uplifting a note of manly earnestness in his declaration of determination to be a Constitutional Sovereign in the strictest sense of the word.

Jan. 24. A Hitch. A curious, what may prove an embarrassing, discovery has been made in connection with the law governing procedure in the matter of the life of Parliament on the demise of the Crown. Up to 1867, Parliament was on such occasions dissolved as soon as it had wound up its work, fresh writs being issued under the seal of the new Sovereign. The Reform Act of that year abrogated the necessity. On referring to the statute it appears that by some strange confusion it is enacted that nothing set forth therein shall apply either to Scotland or Ireland. The logical conclusion of the matter would be that in accordance with the old law there must be a fresh general election in those parts of the United Kingdom. Happily there is a six-months' breathing space during which the question of dissolution or otherwise will not acutely arise. The probability is that in the meanwhile the Government will bring in an amending bill, making clear the obvious intention of the Act that dissolution should not in any part of the kingdom necessarily follow on demise of the Crown.[1]

Jan. 25. Condolence and Congratulation. To-day "Edward Rex" notifies to both Houses his accession to the Throne, and both respond with votes of condolence on the death of his royal mother and congratulation on His Majesty's succession.

[1] The matter was referred to the Law Officers of the Crown, who, after long deliberation advised that the intent of the Act of 1867 was obvious, and that there would be no necessity for fresh elections.

Fifteen years ago last Monday Queen Victoria made what proved to be her last appearance on the Throne in the House of Lords. The scene was marked by the accustomed stateliness of the rare occasion. The Chamber was flooded with light and colour. Peers wore their scarlet robes, trimmed with bars of ermine indicating their varied degree. Representatives of foreign Powers, strange orders glittering on their uniforms, sat on the front bench in the Bishops' quarter. The Opposition side, sparsely peopled even on nights of pitched battle, was thronged with ladies in evening dress. The side galleries were filled by Peeresses. The plainest dressed lady in the brilliant throng was the first lady in the land, a speck of black in the high-canopied Throne.

At the Bar, closely packed, stood the Commons, with the Speaker in the front line. Immediately behind him towered Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Leader of the House of Commons, and Mr. Gladstone, chief of an Opposition that could, whenever it pleased—six days later the pleasure came—turn the Government out. In the Lords the Marquis of Salisbury, then as now, was Leader, faced by Lord Granville, cheerily making much of his numerically minute following.

Of these two were taken and two left. When, to-night, the revolving years brought round the fifteenth anniversary of the week of the Queen's final visit to Westminster it found Lord Salisbury still in the place of the Leader of a strangely constituted Conservative Party, with Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, dispensing the proceeds of Death Duties provided by Sir William Harcourt. As for the other two, nor the opening nor the proroguing of Parliaments has any more interest.

The contrast between the scene on January 21, 1886, and that presented to-night, was chiefly due to the ladies. Once more the Peeresses came down in scores,

filling the side galleries, swarming in the hutches at the back of the Throne. But whereas fifteen years ago they were arrayed in evening dress, the sheen of diamonds glittering in tremulous flame under the gaslight, to-night they presented long lines of monotonous black. There was something almost ghastly in the effect wrought by this unrelieved border of crape strung round the chamber. The Peers were in mourning, as were the Commons. But at this time of the year Englishmen take naturally to clothes of sombre hue, and the somewhat more pronounced shade might pass without observation. This gloomy spectacle of black-robed dames, for once silent as the grave their dress recalled, was the most effective reminder yet presented of the great grief that has this week gripped the Empire.

The Duke of Cambridge.

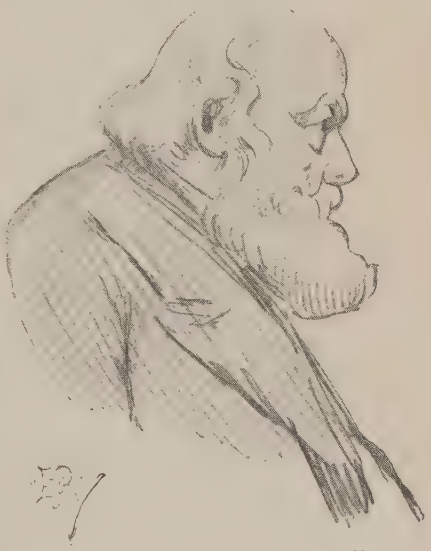
On the crowded floor of the House there was one prominent bench upon which seats were conspicuously reserved. It was the front of the Cross Benches, at the right end of which the genial presence of the Prince of Wales has long been familiar. At one time the Duke of Edinburgh used to sit on his left hand. In later days came the Duke of York. The Duke of Cambridge entering the House to-night to join in the mourning for a Royal cousin whose more than fourscore years he has exceeded, hobbled past the nearer end of the bench, seating himself in the middle. There was no reason why he should not have taken the corner seat. Albert Edward Prince of Wales was not expected nor will he any more fill the place. The venerable Duke walked heavily with the assistance of a stick. The saving even of a pace or two in his journey was something to think of. But, Royal Duke though he be, nearest living link with the Georges, he knows his place and carefully took it.

By and by another Prince of Wales will fill the

corner seat, his predecessor, the nation hopes, being regularly seen at due season on the Throne. Before the accession of Queen Victoria it was the ordinary practice of the Sovereign not only to open Parliament in person, but to be present at the ceremony of Prorogation. The young Queen forthwith followed precedent in this matter. She prorogued the Parliament in Session when she came to the Throne, and she opened the first Parliament that met in her reign. Her widowhood interrupted a procedure for some years regularly observed. Most of us remember the shout of delight which welcomed her resolve to reappear on the scene during the first Premiership of the favourite Minister who made her Empress of India.

Funereal Oratory.

When occasion presents itself demanding a funeral oration the thoughts of the House of Commons ever turn back to Mr. Gladstone. Of all forms of oratory this is the most difficult in which to achieve triumph. On a famous occasion Disraeli attempted to get out of the difficulty by "conveying" and adapting passages from some one else's funeral sermon. Mr. Gladstone, not least markedly when he delivered his eulogy on Disraeli, lately dead, was at his best when confronted by this difficulty.



"The Ancient Servitor."

Comparing to-night's effort in the two Houses it must be said that the Commons came off best.

Lord Salisbury, from whom much was justly expected, proved a little disappointing. The ancient servitor of the dead Sovereign, her long-time friend, had difficulty in mastering the emotion that overcame him. With great effort he succeeded. He was even less oratorical in style than his nephew and the Leader of the Opposition in the other House. He had no notes, and did not try to make a speech about the Queen. He just talked about her, of her goodness, of her devotion to the country, of her tireless care of its interests, of the penetration, amounting almost to intuition, with which she surveyed and dealt with great questions of State.

No one expected Lord Kimberley to shine, hence there was no disappointment. He prattled along in pleasing way, being chiefly concerned to show how in State affairs the Queen was wiser even than he. The Prime Minister, illustrating the profound sense of penetration, almost intuition, with which the Queen saw perils ahead, declared with confidence that through her long reign no Minister ever disregarded her advice or pressed her to disregard it herself without afterwards feeling he had incurred a dangerous responsibility. Lord Kimberley supplied a modern instance in support of this assertion.

"I remember well a case," he said, "which I cannot refer to," and proceeded to refer to it at some length.

Differing from a view her Majesty held, he pressed his own opinion, and the Queen ultimately gave way, warning him that he would lament the consequences. Printed words cannot even hint at the complacency with which Lord Kimberley told the sequel to this case to which he could not refer.

"I well remember afterwards," he said, "when I met her, I remarked, 'Well, ma'am, I am bound to

admit that your judgment was sounder than my own ; the apprehensions that you entertain have been fulfilled.' "

In the House of Commons Mr. Balfour struck a loftier note than this nursery prattle. He was profoundly moved. It seemed at first he would have difficulty in finding words in which to deliver his message. They came in slow sequence, the very hesitancy adding something to the effect. His speech had the simplicity of Lord Kimberley's, but of quite another kind. In exquisite sentences he pictured the end.

" She passed away with her children and her children's children to the third generation around her, beloved and cherished of all. She passed away without, I well believe, a single enemy in the world. Even those who loved not England loved her. She passed away not only knowing that she was, I had almost said, worshipped and reverenced by all her subjects, but that their feelings towards her had grown in depth and intensity with every year she was spared to rule over us."

The speech of the Leader of the Opposition in the Commons was a worthy pendant. It had the same structure of simplicity, the same tone of earnestness that marked Mr. Balfour's. Nothing could be finer than the reference to the " friendly, tender, almost familiar mutual understanding between the Queen and her people " that made their relations unique. When Lord Salisbury took part in the speech-making in the House of Lords on the death of Mr. Gladstone, he varied the inevitable monotony of eulogy by his tender reference to Mrs. Gladstone. Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman touched the same note, with equally swift response from the crowded audience, when, hailing the new King, he turned aside to make obeisance to " his august consort who has reigned in the hearts of the British people ever since she first set foot on our soil."

Feb. 14. The King Opens Parliament.

Preliminaries accomplished, the King to-day opened his first Parliment. The spectacle in the House of Lords, orderly as it was magnificent, was preceded in the precincts by a riot never to be forgotten by those who survived it. The passion of members of the House of Commons to see something for nothing, sharply developed on occasions of Naval Reviews and Royal processions, was excited beyond bounds by prospect of the stately historic scene when Edward VII should seat himself on the Throne. To their hot indignation it presently appeared that the Lord Great Chamberlain, with fine scorn for the common horde, had ignored the existence of mere representatives of the people. When the Session is opened by Royal Commission, members of the House of Commons are freely admitted to the side galleries over the Bar and to the pens that flank it. Thence they may, at ease and leisure, gaze upon the stately figure of the Lord Chancellor draped, happily not hidden, in the folds of his crimson robes. On either side of him are other elderly gentlemen masquerading in crimson gowns and cocked hats.

That is a sight worth going far to see. But it is of regular recurrence, presenting itself not only at the opening and prorogation of Parliament, but whenever the Royal Assent is given to a batch of Bills. Very different was the spectacle of to-day, when the King, alighting from a golden coach drawn by eight cream-coloured steeds, gallantly led our new Queen—our old idol—into the House of Lords, and, standing by the Throne, personally addressed "My Lords and Gentlemen."

Outraged Commoners.

This was the occasion when George Henry Hugh Cholmondeley, fourth Marquis, Joint-Hereditary Lord Great Chamberlain of England, took upon himself to flaunt the Commons. The side gal-

leries over the Bar, theirs by long prescription, were taken away and bestowed upon the domestic circle of the Peers. In due time his Majesty would 'dispatch Black Rod, commanding the immediate presence of "this honourable House" to hear the King's Speech read. Eager to obey the Royal injunction, Members found themselves confronted by sheer physical inability. It is easier to get a quart into a pint bottle than to cram 600 gentlemen, some of portly presence, into a space where four score might with difficulty be packed.

Members, inspired by loyalty, each resolved to do his best to be one of the possible eighty. It was no use trying to get in before the Speaker, and the Mace. The Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition, other Ministers and ex-Ministers, would claim the right to follow close on the right hon. gentleman's skirts. After that the race would be to the swift, the battle to the strong.

Accordingly, before the Speaker took the chair, old campaigners occupied strategical points on the line of march to the House of Lords. If they followed the course customary at the opening of Parliament by Royal Commission—remain in their seats till the head of the procession was crossing the lobby and then fall in—they might as well have stayed at home. The outer lobbies being cleared by the police (secretly instructed, there was too much reason to fear, by the Lord Great Chamberlain), the only thing to do was to hover at the Bar and swoop down on the line of march as soon as the Speaker passed through the glass door.

A mad Rush. Thus it came to pass that about the time Black Rod was expected, the Bar of the House of Commons was densely crowded. In vain the Speaker, whose slightest wish is in common times law, called upon members to take their seats. Each man looked at his neighbour, expecting him to obey,

and meanwhile kept his place. "Clear the Bar!" reiterated the Speaker in sterner tones. No one moved. The anguish of the Irish members at this open revolt against constituted authority was pitiful to look upon. A tear trickled down the troubled countenance of Mr. Patrick O'Brien. Redmond *cadet* turned an imploring glance towards the chair, as who should say, "Give me the word and I'll soon clear them out." Failing official encouragement in that direction, the Irish members voiced their outraged feelings by crying "Order! order!" in indignant tones.

Before calling for volunteers the Speaker had recourse to the regular forces.

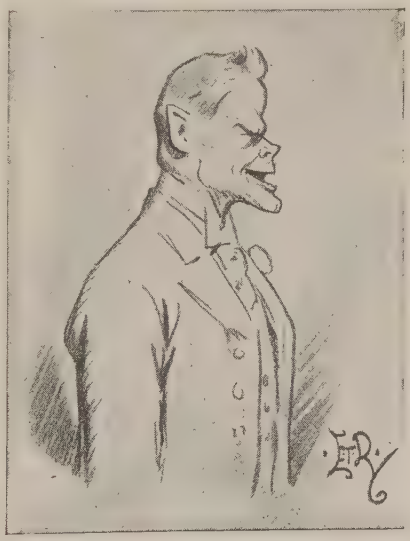
"The Sergeant-at-Arms," he commanded, "will please clear the Bar."

Erskine of Cardross was not in the Crimea for nothing. Drawing himself up to full height, as if he still felt about him the uniform of the Scots Fusilier Guards, he, with right hand lightly laid on the hilt of his rapier, advanced to the charge. The crowd wavered, then fled, withered in the light of battle that flashed from the eyes of the veteran Guardsman.

Through the breach thus made Black Rod entered and delivered the King's commands. The Speaker stepped down from his Chair. The Sergeant-at-Arms mounted the Mace shoulder high. Unhasting, the Speaker paced the floor with his accustomed dignity. Mr. Balfour and Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman fell in behind with other occupants of the two Front Benches. As soon as they had crossed the Bar the mob of members flanking it made a forward dash, each man fighting for himself. In the first rush blank disappointment fell on the foremost rank. A stone wall of policemen barred their approach to the outer lobby. They reckoned that, opening to let the head of the procession pass, the police would straightway disperse and that there would be opportunity of propelling

the Speaker at a run into the presence of his King. "Instead of which" the Speaker, the Mace, Ministers, and ex-Ministers, having passed through, the stone wall reformed, moving in their rear, offering an invulnerable barrier to the mad rush.

It surged all the same. Donnybrook Fair, Mr. Flavin sorrowfully admitted, wasn't in it. And after the deadly struggle, in which elbows were scored, ribs indented, hats smashed, and policemen trampled on, dishevelled Members arrived at the House of Lords to find the side galleries, their special property, filled with fair women!



"Donnybrook Fair isn't in it!"

Feb. 16. Wasting Time. In a comparatively small way one of the most useful reforms of Parliamentary procedure was established when, a few years ago, it was ordered that the process of balloting for precedence of private Bills and resolutions should take place in one of the committee rooms upstairs. Formerly, through many years, this was done in the House, delaying the approach to real business. Now, the names of members desiring to ballot having been handed in at the table on the first or second day of the Session, the remaining stages are quietly carried out upstairs. This is in accordance with a sessional

order. To-day Mr. Balfour, greatly daring, proposed to make the rule a standing order, an arrangement that would further save time by rendering unnecessary the annual motion. But so sacred is the ark of Parliamentary procedure that the First Lord of the Treasury having written the proposal on the orders of the day announced his readiness to run away if any one objected to the further reform.

Incentive was forthcoming in the intervention of Mr. Healy, who suggested that the reform might be carried further. In accordance with existing arrangements, members having balloted for places will next Tuesday present themselves to "bring in Bills." This is a tiresome, absolutely useless procedure. The Speaker taking in hand the long list calls on the member whose name stands first. The person addressed lifts his hat in token of desire to introduce a Bill, the full style of which is read out by the Clerk at the table.

"Who is prepared to bring in this Bill?" the Speaker asks.

In response the member reads out a list of names, modestly concluding, "and myself." This formula is repeated a hundred times, occasionally oftener. When the list is gone through members in charge of Bills congregate at the Bar, and, called upon in turn, literally "bring them in." What actually happens is that they hand to the Clerk at the table a piece of blank foolscap endorsed with the name of their Bill. If the purposeless performance is got through with a loss of time not exceeding an hour and a half those in charge of public business consider themselves fortunate.

Mr. Healy wanted to abolish this process with that of public balloting. Mr. Balfour, fearful of raising discussion, hastily withdrew that portion of his resolution making the sessional order a standing one.

CHAPTER III

THE CIVIL LIST

The Civil List.—A Little Mixed.—Dropping into Irish.—Mr. O'Brien Once More.—Mistaken Identity.—Lord Salisbury and the Commons.—The Premier's Dilemma.—Calling in the Police.—Cousin Hugh Runs away.—Lord Cranborne.—An Honest Man.

Feb. 18 The Civil List. Private communications passing between the two front benches of the House of Commons have resulted in amicable settlement of the Civil List. The proposal made by the First Lord of the Treasury was that the sum should be fixed at the round half-million. As was expected, the Opposition demurred, and finally it was settled that the amount (£385,000) of Queen Victoria's Civil List should continue, with an additional £50,000 a year paid as an annuity to Queen Alexandra.

One of the members of the Joint Committee appointed to settle the matter tells me the King has, in this delicate matter, observed a fine attitude of aloofness. He did not open communication on the subject, and when approached by the First Lord of the Treasury, he left the matter entirely in the hands of the House of Commons.

There can be no question that the total amount suggested will be ample to meet the expenditure of the Royal establishment, even supposing, as is naturally expected, it vastly exceeds the frugal fashion of the late reign. The Civil List was originally arrived at by taking the total charges

in the various departments of William IV's Household and fixing them as the amount thereafter to be allowed per department in the Household of Queen Victoria. How that worked will appear from an item set forth in the report of the Committee to be found entombed in old journals of the House of Commons. In the year 1836 the amount of tradesmen's bills in the Lord Chamberlain's department of the King's Household was £41,000. It happened that William IV, unconscious of the writing on the wall, had in the year of his death spent large sums of money in decorating his palace. Of the sum named nearly half went to upholsterers and cabinet makers, carpet manufacturers, joiners, locksmiths, paperhangers, and decorators.

It might be supposed that the Civil List Committee of 1837 would have taken into account these exceptional circumstances. It was not likely the young Queen would every year spend over £11,000 in upholstering, and nearly £1,000 with the paperhanger. But, strictly bound by the principle adopted, they accepted this extraordinary expenditure as the average cost in the matter of repairs and decoration to be met from year to year. Moreover, since the Civil List was settled, the practice has crept in of charging all costs connected with Royal Palaces to the Civil Service Estimates.

Feb. 19. A Little Mixed. In debate on the Temperance Amendment to the Address, Mr. Tully told a good story. A friend, spending a wet Thursday in an inn in Kirkcudbrightshire, engaged upon a game of billiards. Presently entered the landlord, very drunk, and indignantly stopped the play. His wife afterwards explained that he was in the habit of getting drunk every Sunday. Mistaking the day, he had succumbed on a Thursday, and from force of habit believing it was Sunday, was shocked to find billiards being played.

Feb. 21. Dropping into Irish.

Still on the Address. On the return of the Speaker from his traditional chop, Mr. T. O'Donnell endeavoured to vary the dulness of the sitting by dropping into Irish. In order to secure an audience one of the new member's friends took notice of the obvious fact that there were not forty members present. As gentlemen who had rushed in to make a quorum were strolling out again, their progress was arrested by the sound of an unfamiliar tongue. The few remaining seated stared in amazement. After pause it dawned upon them that Mr. O'Donnell was addressing the Chair in the Celtic tongue.

The Speaker, the first to recover his self-possession, promptly rose and called "Order! Order!" Speech in the Irish tongue was, he said, not permissible. Mr. O'Donnell, with difficulty made to understand that he must resume his seat when the Speaker rose, was up again like a shot. He proceeded to discuss in an unknown tongue what were shrewdly suspected to be the iniquities of the British in the Transvaal.

"I must ask the hon. member not to disregard the ruling of the Chair," said the Speaker sternly.

The little joke having been carried far enough, Mr. Redmond advised his hon. friend not to persist in his Irish exercise, hedging by recommending him not to continue his address in English. The member for West Kerry, who, before he came to Westminster, was a National School teacher, and learnt his native tongue on his father's farm in Kerry, kept his seat, in spite of the blandishments of gentlemen opposite, who incited him to resume his remarks, whatever they, being translated, may have portended.

A characteristic comment on the incident was made by another Irish member, Mr. John Murphy, member for East Kerry.

"Mr. Speaker," he shouted, "the Irish tongue is

the best thing in which Irish members can make an English Government know what they want."

Feb. 22. Mr. O'Brien Once More.

Mr. W. O'Brien, after six years' absence from the Parliamentary scene, made his rentrée, moving an amendment of prodigious length, extolling the United Irish League, of which he is the founder, and indicting the Government under which he lives. He has lost none of his strongly marked mannerisms. There is the same monotonous alternation of blood-curdling whisper and tempestuous shout, the unwearying successive gestures of the hands clasped behind his back, then suddenly—*à propos* of no particular point—the rapid beating of one on the open palm of the other.

The Irish Nationalists mustered in considerable numbers, cheering with a regularity and unanimity that would have made the fortune of the claque in a Paris theatre. Elsewhere there were great gaps on the benches, widening as the scolding bout was prolonged.

New members who had heard and read of Mr. O'Brien, of his diplomatic waving of his pocket-handkerchief to Mr. Parnell in his moment of dire peril—he himself being at safe distance on the other side of the Atlantic—watched his movements with curiosity. When he entered with long stride it was pretty to see their glance instinctively fall to the level of his knee. On a historic occasion Mr. Parnell "took off his coat" to forward the Home Rule cause. What if Mr. O'Brien had taken off another garment in order to champion the United Irish League? He was, however, fully clothed and, as presently appeared, in his usual frame of mind.

Since he for a while left us, nothing has been seen in the House of Commons so realistic of the deeply dyed villain of the twopenny theatre as is presented

when Mr. William O'Brien—really a harmless man where Tim Healy is not concerned—is on his legs. His unkempt hair, his gleaming spectacles, his voice, now sunk to a hollow whisper, anon uplifted like the wind shrieking in the rigging of a storm-tossed bark, his wildly waving arms, his right hand beating the palm of his left as if it were an Irish landlord, combine to make the flesh creep.

"A Really Harmless Man."

Mistaken Identity. The Attorney-General for Ireland in the course of reply to a branch of Mr. O'Brien's comprehensive indictment, observed that when swearing in a jury no man had been set aside on account of his religious opinions.

"That's a d—— lie," shouted a voice from the Opposition benches.

The Speaker rose and sharply scrutinised the quarter whence the exclamation came. "If I knew who used that expression," he said, "I would name him."

This interruption led to a regrettable misunderstanding, which for Mr. Bryn-Roberts illustrated afresh the cardinal truth that in the midst of life we really never know what may happen next. Dozing in his place after a high tea—hot muffins, cold ham, pickles, and the like—he was rudely awakened by hearing Mr. Johnston of Ballykilbeg

accuse him of the offence that had just shocked the House. He was painfully conscious that the Speaker had turned upon him an awful glance. Was it possible that a gentleman of almost imposing respectability of appearance could so far forget himself as to make use of such an expression ?

The House is familiar with Mr. Bryn-Roberts' manner of speech. He has a habit of casually straying into debate and staying there perhaps a little longer than prejudice welcomes. He is one of the small body of members who regard the Boer as beatific, his own countrymen as brutes. That is an eccentricity regrettable ; but it is not necessarily accompanied by lapses into bad language. Also Mr. Bryn-Roberts is of opinion that " the power of the House of Lords should be restrained." That also is not incompatible with restraint from use of language heard in Welsh chapels only by way of quotation. The piercing eye of the Speaker had the effect of rousing Mr. Bryn-Roberts from the dazed condition into which he was momentarily struck. Glaring across the House at the Orange chieftain, he in a voice comically mild considering the language used, said " Will you, please, name the ruffian who said it was me ? "

Here was a hard case that would have floored a Speaker of less self-command and readiness than Mr. Gully. An undiscovered member had been guilty of a gross breach of order. The Speaker had risen with direful threat to name the anonymous if he would obligingly mention what his name was. An esteemed member sitting immediately opposite, in full view of the quarter whence the interruption came, accused the member for Carnarvonshire. Whereupon that gentleman retorted that Mr. Johnston (who has been Inspector of Irish Fisheries) was a ruffian.

The Speaker came out of the ordeal with his accustomed dignity. " The hon. member," he said, " who

has imputed those words to an hon. member who did not utter them, and the hon. member who instead of requesting me to call upon him to withdraw has himself used a violent expression, are both to blame and should withdraw."

The construction of this sentence is obviously based on the literary style of The House that Jack Built. Its conclusion was direct and unmistakable. Its effect, instantaneous. Mr. Johnston, of Ballykilbeg, rose, apologised to Mr. Bryn-Roberts, and withdrew his accusation. Mr. Bryn-Roberts, not to be outdone in courtesy, begged to withdraw the expression used by him. Once more, as Mr. Balfour observed on Thursday, in the case of Mr. T. W. Russell and Mr. John Redmond, Mercy and Truth kissed each other.

This is all very well, but who was it threw this lingual bomb on the floor of the House? Mr. Sam Smith, waiting for opportunity to move his amendment to the Address, chanced to be seated in the neighbourhood whence it was launched. The mind revolts from dwelling on possible conclusions.

March 1. Lord Salisbury and the Commons.

There is at first sight nothing about Lord Salisbury that recalls the personality of Benedick. Nor does the House of Commons, winsome as it sometimes is, instantly realize impressions of the charm of Beatrice. Nevertheless, there is something in the relations between the Premier and the institution he likes to have alluded to as "the Lower House" that recalls the courtship of the young lord of Padua and the niece of Leonato. Always girding at each other, beneath their attitude of aversion lurk esteem, admiration, almost affection. Lord Salisbury has the inestimable advantage, withheld from Lord Rosebery, of having been a member of the House of Commons. He won his spurs there, and was fond of digging them into the sides of the distinguished

member of his own party with whom, in later years he, arm in arm, brought from Berlin Peace with Honour.

The House of Commons at this day entertains unawares a strikingly close revival of the Lord Robert Cecil who sat for Stamford nearly half a century ago. Looking at the slim figure, the ascetic face, of the Member for Greenwich, there is no point of resemblance with the burly figure of the full-cheeked Premier. Yet, as appears from contemporary sketches, the Lord Robert Cecil of the early 'fifties much resembled in figure the Lord Hugh Cecil of to-day. Marked for every one's observation is the similarity of the debating style. There is the same high scorn for most other people, the same polished phrase, the same glittering sarcasm, the same sardonic humour.

The Premier's Dilemma. To-night opportunity was provided the Commons of paying off some old scores with the Premier. That lordly person found himself in the position of appearing before them to claim his wages. It is among the oddities of the British Constitution that it does not recognize the existence of the most important of the Sovereign's Ministers. No salary attaches to the office of Prime Minister, nor has he any front place in the Table of Precedence,[1] which, regarded as a Table, is second only in importance to the one Moses brought down from Mount Sinai.

A consequence of this oversight is that the Premiership is always held in connexion with some salaried office of Cabinet rank. Lord Salisbury, took the Seals of the Foreign Office. On the reconstruction of the Ministry he laid down the double burden, content with the quite-sufficient labours of the Premiership combined with the lead of the House

[1] At the instance of His Majesty this omission was rectified on the succession of Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman to the Premiership in 1906.

of Lords. In so doing he found himself not only deprived of ceremonial precedence, which a Cecil can afford to live without, but wageless.

The debate was, everybody knew, only a bit of fun started by the young men below the gangway. No one seriously disputed payment of £758 accruing to Lord Salisbury as Privy Seal salary from Novem-

"God save Ireland!"

ber 13 last. "Coals are cheap to-day," cries the itinerant vendor, with disillusioning regularity. The House was inclined to agree with Mr. Malcolm in his delicate ways of putting it, that at £2,000 a year the Prime Minister is very cheap.

March 7. Calling in the Police. In the early hours of yesterday morning there was a scene that recalled the palmy days of obstruction. On the Education Vote being submitted and orders issued to clear the

House for a division the Irish members refused to walk out. The Speaker summoned (the episode opened in Committee) and refusal reiterated, he called in the police in attendance on the House. In business-like manner they carried forth the recalcitrants, what time Mr. Flavin, borne shoulder high, chanted "God save Ireland," his compatriots awaiting their turn lustily joining in the chorus.

To-night, Mr. Balfour in a crowded House moved a resolution amending Standing Order 21 in the direction of suspending for the rest of the Session any member, or members acting jointly, who shall make it necessary to have recourse to force in order to compel obedience to the Speaker's direction. A member refusing to obey the direction of the Speaker might, as happened in this case, be suspended for a week. But there was no penalty for forcibly resisting that direction. It was to supply that omission he submitted his resolution.

Lord Hugh Cecil, "going one step further" as the lamented Sir Walter Barttelot used to say, moved to substitute the penalty of committal to prison during the pleasure of the House.

Cousin Hugh Runs Away.

The author of the historic message "Don't hesitate to shoot" could not fail to sympathize with this aspiration. As Cousin Hugh pointed out, it was a matter of ordinary procedure in analogous cases. It not unfrequently happens, about the midnight hour when the Irish members yielded to what Mr. John Redmond delicately alluded to as "an ebullition of feeling," that the policeman, going his lonely round, finds a lady or gentleman prone on the pavement. Unrespondent to invitation to get up and leave the place it becomes absolutely necessary for the guardian of law and order forcibly to remove them. If they still resist they are haled to prison. To Lord Hugh's pitilessly logical mind there was visible no

"Cousin Hugh."

reason why there should be one law for the inebriate on the pavement, and another for the exuberant Irish member clinging to the benches of the House of Commons.

The subject, treated from the ethical point of view, would make an interesting opening for debate at branches of the Young Men's Christian Association. The Leader of the House of Commons had to treat it as a matter of practical business. He recognized that public opinion was not yet educated up to the point reached at a bound by the young Member for Greenwich, and accordingly suggested the withdrawal of the amendment.

Lord Hugh, having had his fling, was quite willing to assent to this arrangement. But the Irish members are too old as Parliamentary hands to let him off on such easy terms. An amendment submitted from the Chair can be withdrawn only by unanimous consent.

"The amendment by leave withdrawn," said the Speaker.

"No!" shouted the Irish members. "Strangers

will withdraw," responded the Speaker, and the sand-glass on the table was turned to mark the interval before the Division.

In a pathetic little poem popular last century lamenting a series of deaths in a family, it is mentioned that "the first to go was little Jane." In the House of Commons this morning the first to go, in obedience to the Speaker's injunction, was Lord Hugh Cecil. As he stepped down the gangway, and, with long stride, made his way towards the door, his slim figure was enveloped in a hurricane of cheers from the Irish. He would have done better to have stayed and played his hand out to the last. Truly it would have been a little comical to have had the Premier's son voting as the sole unit in a division where the tellers for the minority were Mr. Dillon and Mr. Tully. But martyrdom in a righteous cause is a congenial condition for the contemplation of Lord Hugh Cecil. On the question of the disestablishment of the Church, he would walk with unfaltering steps to the stake. He shrank from one ludicrous situation, to fall into another equally undignified, and lacking the halo of heroism.

Lord Cranborne.

For Mr. Arthur Balfour the experience was an addition to a long series of similar embarrassments. Leadership of the House of Commons would be endurable only for his cousins. They share in marked degree hereditary tendency to the utterance of blazing indiscretions. Viscount Cranborne has since he entered the House been a terror to the Treasury Bench. He has no respect for Sir John Gorst, and has been heard to speak slightingly of Mr. Jesse Collings. If question touching Mother Church or the ownership of land upstarts he is quite ready to head any cabal that may be formed in the Ministerial camp. It is probable he would halt at entrance to the

Division Lobby if his going over to the enemy seriously threatened the existence of the Government. Short of that he has shown himself delightfully free from family ties when they attempt to strangle personal convictions.

Bought off at the high price of the Under Secretaryship for Foreign Affairs, it was reasonably thought nothing more was to be feared from Lord Cranborne. Almost his first achievement from the Treasury Bench was his artless disclosure of the orders under which silence was imposed upon him when Supplementary Questions on Foreign topics were submitted. This had followed on a haughty reply to the question whether a treaty with Japan had been sought for, "Great Britain does not ask for treaties," said Lord Salisbury's son. "It grants them."

"Great Britain does not ask for Treaties."

This amazing indiscretion led to motion for the

adjournment of the House, and the appropriation of two hours and a half of a business sitting for the purposes of angered debate.

An Honest Man.

That episode will have its value if it prevent extension of experiment in the direction of Lord Cranborne's younger brother. Lord Hugh Cecil is too precious a possession to be lost on the Treasury Bench. He is one of the extremely few men in the House for whom expediency is repellent rather than alluring. No influence, paternal or cousinly, would make him step an eighth of an inch out of what he believes to be the right path. He is almost fanatically honest.

His speech to-night on his impossible amendment to the Standing Order, was a triumph of unpremeditated art. Amid an uproar that would have daunted men of burlier build, Lord Hugh unfalteringly delivered a series of perfectly framed sentences. The only sign of nervousness about him was the strange contortions of his hands, the ungainly swinging about of his long arms. When the uproar in the Irish camp was prolonged he paused perforce. When it momentarily died away he began again where he left off, and unflinchingly went on to the end. A singularly sweet voice, a frail, almost effeminate personal appearance, contrasted effectively with the uncompromising terms of his amendment, the implacably bitter tone of his argument.

CHAPTER IV

A WAR OFFICE DUEL

Hoist with their own Petard.—Irish Humour.—Lord Lansdowne and Lord Wolseley.—The Premier's Pretty Way.—Sir William Harcourt.—Patriotism and Pay.—The Man in the Street.—Lord Salisbury and Lord Rosebery.

March 8. Hoist with their own Petard.

It is generally recognized that the Premier has reason to regard with satisfaction the work of Wednesday morning and Thursday night to whose accomplishment the Irish members undesignedly contributed.

For many years the inadequacy of Standing Order 21 has been keenly felt. Under current condition of the Irish party it was distinctly favourable to its members. Mr. William O'Brien, though on Obstruction bent, is of a frugal mind. He has made it known that the modest weekly wage apportioned to such of his followers as shall declare it necessary to the maintenance of their social status amid the luxuries of the Metropolis shall be payable only in cases of regular attendance. No song, no supper. No speech, or vote, or shout of "Oh, oh!" or "Ha, ha!" when Colonel Saunderson uplifts his inoffensive head, no weekly pay. The economic rule does not apply to cases where misconstrued patriotic effort is penalized by a week's suspension. It simply means a week's holiday on full pay, with the distinction of exchanging the billycock hat of daily life for the crown of martyrdom.

The temptation has proved so great that a member having enjoyed one week in such conditions would be

inclined by a fresh outbreak to get a fortnight's holiday, keeping in hand for fine weather the prize of three weeks' expulsion following on a third so-called offence. The "ebullition of feeling" which broke forth with the birth of Thursday morning has spoiled all that. The O'Brien exchequer will not run to paying the wages of a member laid on the shelf for a whole Session. The Standing Order as amended will consequently bar repetition of such scenes as disgraced the House this week.

March 13. Irish Humour. Tim Healy enlivened dull debate this afternoon with one or two flashes of humour. Mr. Macartney, complaining that Ulster receives small benefit from the Congested Districts Board, observed that they were worse off than peasants on the West Coast, who had the benefit of the Gulf stream.

"Why don't you put a tax upon it?" cried Tim.

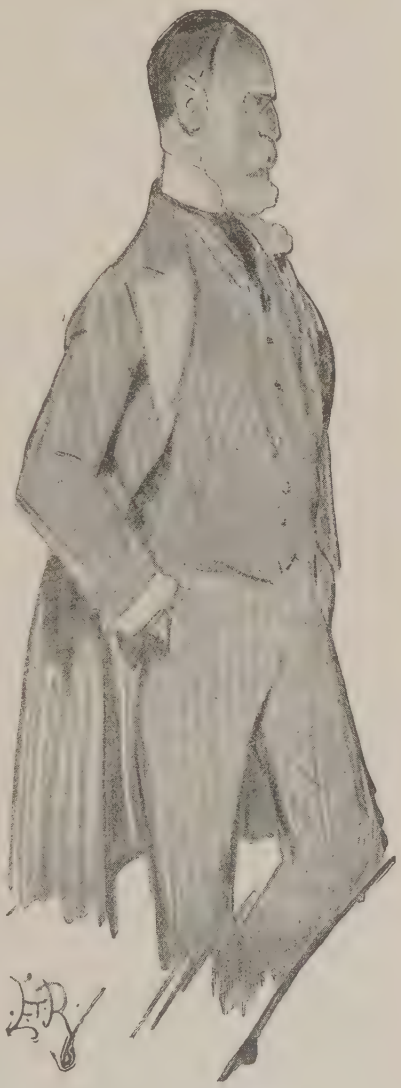
Mr. Wyndham protesting that if Irish members insisted on talking so much there was no opportunity for legislation demanded by them Tim pointed out that Irish members, as had happened that morning when they kept the House sitting for two hours after midnight discussing Report of Supply, took their turn outside the limits of the orders of the day.

"Why," he said reproachfully, "you are feeding the dog with bits of its own tail."

Of quite another kind of humour was Dr. Ambrose's contribution to this debate. Referring to a speech delivered the other day by Mr. Markham he said, "I see the hon. gentleman is not in his place. I ask him now, Mr. Speaker, why he is not here?"

March 15. Lord Lansdowne and Lord Wolseley. The Premier's treatment of the case of the former Secretary of State for War and the ex-Commander-in-Chief is highly characteristic. When ten days ago the public washing of War Office linen took place the

House of Lords was crowded as it is only on occasions when either the Church or rents are in danger. Members of the House of Commons, deserting their own place, thronged the galleries appropriated to their use, thoughtfully placed at a distant end of the Chamber where only one-half of what is said can be heard. The steps of the Throne were thronged with Privy Councillors. Amongst them the Premier's principal colleague from the other House, Mr. Balfour, stood shoulder to shoulder with Sir Charles Dilke. The interest displayed was fully, if painfully, justified.



Sir Charles Dilke.

The crowd heard the Commander-in-Chief, a veteran soldier of world-wide fame, denounce the existing War Office system as pernicious, fraught with peril to the Empire. They

listened while the Secretary of State retorted with charges laying at Lord Wolseley's door the chief calamities of the campaign in South Africa. It was he who was responsible for the disastrous shutting up of a British army in the death-trap of Ladysmith. On his advice the Cabinet had rested on the broken reed of conviction that a single Army Corps would amply suffice for the subjugation of the two South African Republics.

As Lord Rosebery said, it was one of the most painful debates in one's experience. A great captain who had fought for his country in two hemispheres, who had more than once had tendered to him the thanks of Parliament, who had long lived in the confidence and esteem of his country, was made the subject of one of the gravest personal attacks that ever whelmed a subordinate in the hearing of Parliament and the face of the world.

The Premier's Pretty Way.

The matter came up again to-night on a motion by Lord Wolseley for all papers bearing on the charges brought against him by the Secretary of State for War. When the duel opened the Premier protested that he really couldn't understand what Lord Lansdowne and Lord Wolseley fought each other for. As far as he could make out, before the issue of the Order in Council of 1895 the Adjutant-General reported directly to the Commander-in-Chief. Since that date he carried his reports direct to the Secretary of State. The former arrangement pleased Lord Wolseley ; the latter was more gratifying to Lord Lansdowne.

There it was in a nutshell ; the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. To-night the Premier presented himself in the same frame of mind. Lord Wolseley had delivered a long, carefully-prepared speech, giving chapter and verse in disproof of Lord

Lansdowne's specific charges. Lord Lansdowne made rejoinder in the course of which, as Lord Rosebery pointed out, he admitted that for political reasons the military advice given by the Commander-in-Chief in June 1899 had been ignored. That momentous admission raised, in form not advantageous to the Government, the question of responsibility for the early disasters of the campaign, the consequent prolongation of a costly, devastating war. That is a vulgar way of regarding the situation. The Prime Minister, looking forth from his lofty mental attitude, could not see small things grovelling at his feet.

"I do not," he said, when, avoiding earlier opportunities, he tardily rose, "propose to add to the debate any observations on military matters. I merely wish to address myself in one word to the Motion on the Paper."

The debate was chiefly concerned with military matters. The question originally raised was the administration of the War Office, turning on Lord Lansdowne's initiative into gravest inquiry affecting the policy and responsibility of the Government. On such matters Lord Salisbury really could not trouble himself. The motion standing on the Paper in the name of Lord Wolseley called for the production of "all papers bearing upon the allegations made by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs against Viscount Wolseley as Commander-in-Chief and upon the statements made by Viscount Wolseley in reply." There is a hard and fast rule governing the production of papers. This Lord Salisbury with philosophic mind proceeded to discuss, ignoring the grave charges brought against his Ministry, heedless of the veteran soldier pleading in broken voice, as "an act of justice between man and man," that the papers necessary to establish his innocence of the charges publicly brought against him should be produced.

It was magnificent—and it was the Marquis.

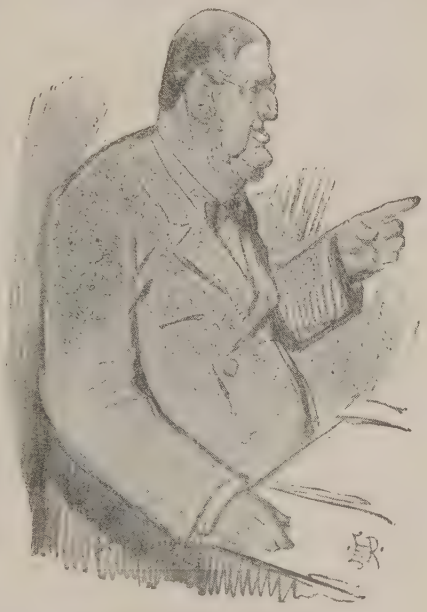
March 30. Sir William Harcourt.

Sir William Harcourt has never been thoroughly comfortable in his place of exile at the gangway end of the front bench. After he and Mr. Morley wrote letters to each other explaining why they could no longer work with esteemed colleagues in former Cabinets, they were punctilious in the habit of seating themselves at the end of the bench. Sir William was, indeed, so strongly attached to it that, coming in one evening and finding Sir Robert Reid had thoughtlessly appropriated his place, he turned him out, just as if he were a gentle Boer found on a homestead whence the white flag had been fired upon. Mr. Morley throughout his fitful attendance is faithful to his corner seat. It is pretty to see Sir William Harcourt involuntarily, unconsciously edge away from it, drawing nearer and nearer to the part of the bench consecrated to the Leader of the Opposition. Occasionally, finding himself thus astray he has gone back to his penitential post. This week, throwing aside reserve, he, in the absence of Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, detained at home by illness, not only returned to his old seat as Chief of the Opposition, but vigorously performed the functions of Leader.

The House much enjoyed the excursion. Rarely has the old war horse scenting battle from near and far shown himself in such fine form.

The experience points a moral Sir William will, it is hoped, lay to heart. The House of Commons has knowledge of two types of Harcourt. There is the gentleman who in the course of a set debate on a big topic presents himself at the table with clothes and hair nicely brushed, and lays upon the brass-bound box a thick bundle of manuscript. The saddened House knows what is in store for it. These leaves

contain impromptus from the New Forest, epigrammatic sentences, cut and polished in the lamplight of the quiet study at Malwood. It is, of course, an able address, equal in force and form to any contributed through the long hours of mechanical debate. But as Sir William bends over the box, and in slow succession takes up page after page of his manuscript, reads them, flings them aside with magnificent gesture, members furtively catch themselves trying to count how many remain unread, are guiltily conscious of a sense of pleasurable relief as they see the bulk gradually diminishing.



Sir William Harcourt.

Almost every one of ordinary ability having a gift of turning phrases, some leisure and the use of a study, could write a paper that would pass muster when read in the House of Commons. Sir William Harcourt is one of the few born debaters the House possesses. He sees a point with unerring quickness. His experience of public affairs, whether in closeness, length or variety, exceeds that of any of his contemporaries. His wit is lambent, his phrases perfect as they fall from his lips. Why should he of all men hamper himself with voluminous notes, the very sight of which chills

enthusiasm among his friends and gives the enemy occasion to blaspheme ?

April 1. Patriotism and Pay.

If the shade of Joseph Gillis Biggar's figure revisits Westminster it will observe with keen interest a certain condition of the present Irish party. This Session, the first time for many years, the system of payment of members has been revived. Mr. Biggar was the first Chancellor of the Irish Parliamentary Exchequer, the premier Paymaster of the Forces. Once a week, at a stated hour, he sat at his desk with well-filled purse, and paid the weekly wage of the patriots, who, having given up to their country what was meant for the domestic hearth, very properly looked to their country to supply the charges of living in the Saxon capital.

There is nothing wrong nor anything to be ashamed of in such arrangements. Payment of members is a principle established in France and other countries. In the House of Commons it is, to a limited extent, recognized in the case of one or two Labour representatives. The rank and file of Mr. Redmond's forces, like their predecessors under the autocratic rule of Mr. Parnell, are not in a position to bestow time and labour unrequited. *Pas d'argent, pas de Suisse*, was an essential condition of earlier service on the warpath. In undertaking to unite the Irish party (the forcible ejectment of Mr. Tim Healy and his friends being, *more Hibernico*, an essential preliminary), Mr. William O'Brien frankly recognized the imperativeness of the stipulation.

The difference between Mr. Biggar's day and that upon which Irish patriots have more recently fallen is marked by the length and depth of the Parliamentary purse. Mr. Biggar was in command of practically boundless funds. Pilgrimages to the United States and to Australia, made by Mr. Parnell and his colleagues,

brought in a steady flow of gold. When the Parnellite party broke up in the débâcle that made Committee Room No. 15 as familiar a battlefield as Waterloo or Gravelotte, there still remained a balance at the banker's. When Mr. Biggar bolted to Paris, at a time when warrants for arrest were flying round the heads of the Land Leaguers, he took with him a large sum of money, which in course of time came to be known as "the Paris Fund."

The financial position of the Irish Parliamentary party at the present time is but the pale shadow of the prosperity over which Mr. Biggar genially presided. There is no probability that at the end of the session there will be any balance left providing opportunity for brotherly remonstrance as to its disposal. It was understood at the time of the General Election that Mr. William O'Brien, having called the tune, was prepared to pay the piper. Through the agency of a matrimonial alliance, "Providence has blessed him with teapots and spoons" beyond the average possessions of an Irish member. The proceeds of some of these he was understood to be ready to devote to the maintenance of less favoured colleagues in the Parliamentary party, always with the essential preliminary hinted at, that, in the interests of unity, Tim Healy should be "chucked."

It would be a strong, perhaps an insupportable strain on private resources to finance a party so numerous as that returned by the Irish Nationalists. Mr. O'Brien's personal contribution has, accordingly, been supplemented by public subscriptions. These have been uninspired by the enthusiasm that for some years filled and replenished Mr. Parnell's money-bags. It is understood that the campaign of the present session was entered upon with not more than £1,400 in the bank. The weekly wage was fixed at the sum of £5, and as also, according to Lobby rumour, not less

than fifty members declared themselves in a position to claim it, it is evident the lump sum named would not carry the cause far.

If the arrangement is to be maintained throughout the existence of the present Parliament it is obvious that systematic and world-wide effort must be made to keep the treasury chest full.

April 18. The Man in the Street. Lord Salisbury has several qualifications that justify his claim to the Premiership. In one respect he stands unique among British statesmen. He is absolutely indifferent to the opinions or the vagaries of the Man in the Street. In this respect Mr. Arthur Balfour proves his kinship. Secretly he equally despises the Man in the Street. But living in the House of Commons, impregnated with its traditions, he is compelled to take into consideration the influence of that potent personage. Lord Salisbury, unfettered by House of Commons ties, is able to go the full length of his natural tendency. So far from timidly waiting to serve the caprices of the Man in the Street nothing gives him keener delight than to affront him.

Lord Salisbury and Lord Rosebery. To do him justice, the Premier is almost as contemptuous of the Peer in the House of Lords as he is of the Man in the Street. What he can't understand is that a noble Lord should think it worth while offering remarks on a controversial subject when he (Lord Salisbury) has delivered an opinion thereupon. He is never rude in manner or speech. But his way of intimating that the person he refers to is what Carlyle once called "a puir creature" is unmistakable.

Like every one else who has come in close contact with him in public or private life, he esteems Lord Kimberley. In Earl Spencer he recognizes a peer even of the Cecils. The only man in the House whom

he regards on anything approaching equal terms in the arena of debate is Lord Rosebery. The Premier has a wholesome dislike for making speeches. He never, or hardly ever, prepares one in advance. When dragged into the vortex of debate he rises reluctantly, does not always take the trouble to raise his voice to the height necessary to command the full range of his audience, and retires within himself at the earliest possible moment. Lord Rosebery is, however, certain to draw his fire. Apart from his position in the country and his status as ex-Premier, for neither of which does Lord Salisbury care a brass farthing, he is the only peer absolutely free from subordination to the fetish power with which the House of Lords has come to invest the Premier. He has even been known publicly to chaff the noble Marquis, and after the first thrill of astonishment at the unwonted liberty, Lord Salisbury rather liked it.

CHAPTER V

ENTER WINSTON CHURCHILL

For Twelve Months Only.—Dr. Tanner.—Awaiting the Corpse.—A Midnight March.—Winston Churchill's Maiden Speech.—A Marvellous Memory.—Mr. Gladstone's Strategy.

April 23. For Twelve Months Only.

THE Army Annual Bill, with which the House sat up through the watches of last night, reminds members of a curious historical fact. The raising or keeping of a standing Army within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in time of peace is against the law. This constitutional axiom dates back to the period in English history when the sovereign levied armies, and there was apprehension that they might be used against the people. That period is happily long past; the Army and Navy, though still nominally the King's or the Queen's, are absolutely and directly under the control of Parliament.

Nevertheless, the old fiction is maintained. Parliament, essentially conservative in respect of ancient constitutional practices, declines to repeal the statute forbidding the maintenance of an Army in time of peace. But something must be done, and there has been conceived this device whereby Parliament specially indemnifies all concerned in the acknowledged breach of the law. Still jealous of the sanctity of ancient customs, the indemnity runs only for a year. At this present date the existence of the Army is recognized

and the Mutiny Act enforced " In the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man " till Tuesday next, April 30. It is absolutely necessary that before that date the Army Bill shall be added to the Statute Book, otherwise Tommy Atkins might tweak his Colonel's nose, and would be subject to no penalty other than that following on conviction for common assault.

April 26. Dr. Tanner. Yesterday the turbulent member for Mid-Cork found rest in a Saxon cemetery. There flashed over his grave a streak of humour which he would have understood and enjoyed. In its grim originality there is nothing to equal it in the pages of Lever or Lover.

More especially of late sessions Dr. Tanner's Parliamentary practices grew too strenuous even for his own colleagues. He was like a waterspout. If he could only have been utilized he could have been made serviceable in the cause of disorder. But he was not amenable to discipline. He insisted on playing off his own bat, and as likely as not, would, with the instrument, catch his own side a blow on the back of the head. This led to well-meant effort at repression, openly resented. He was as good as John Dillon or John Redmond any day; and what did they mean when he wanted to accuse Mr. Chamberlain of complicity in the Portsmouth beach murder by turning round and saying " Be quiet, Tanner," or endeavouring by ill-concealed wiles to induce him to leave the House just as he was prepared to have a tussle with the Speaker ?

To tell the truth, Dr. Tanner's withdrawal from the scene is a matter of supreme relief to his colleagues. Being dead, there was the generous impulse to atone for earlier slights by respectful homage to his memory paid by the grave-side. Moreover, since he represented

the extremist development of Parliamentary disorder, exaltation of his memory would be a convenient method of giving a side blow to the dignity of the House of Commons. Accordingly steps were taken to bring about an imposing brotherly demonstration. Wreaths were ordered bearing touching inscriptions. A deputation of his mourning colleagues in the House of Commons was appointed to meet the funeral cortége on its arrival at Paddington Station, and reverentially place the garlands on the coffin. Half-past eleven was the hour publicly named for the interment in Kensal Green cemetery. If the bereaved members arrived at Paddington at ten o'clock they would be in good time to accomplish their mission.

J. F. X.

Awaiting the Corpse.

They turned up punctually, half-a-dozen of them, including Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien, the mildest-mannered man that ever suffered sentence of death for high treason. Lingering on the platform with appropriately dejected air, the deputation bent their heads in mournful salute as the train, punctual to a moment, steamed in from Reading. The heedless passengers descending hurried forth about their daily business. Luggage was trundled out of the van, claimed and carried away. But where was the funeral party, and where the coffin?

Inquiry made in business-like fashion to begin with,

growing in agitation as the truth began to dawn upon the afflicted mourners, revealed the truth. "The family," to whom the late Doctor's political associates are anathema, had played a little game and won every trick. All that was mortal of Dr. Tanner had been brought to town by an earlier train. At the very moment when the perturbed Irish members were reverently searching the van of the passenger train for the coffin it was being lowered into the grave in distant Kensal Green cemetery. What the six members said to each other when they made the discovery is discreetly withheld from newspaper reports of the incident. Its purport would more likely be found in the Athanasian Creed than in the Burial Service.

Of poor Dr. Tanner it may be said that nothing in his stormy life became him more than this final episode. It is a peculiarly hard fate that of all the Irish members he alone should have missed the opportunity of enjoying it. A fighter all his life, his hand against every one (not excluding his own colleagues) it seemed in accord with things that his funeral should be made the occasion of strategy that outwitted the Irish Parliamentary party, carefully arrayed in funeral weeds.

Whilst his manner lacked the repose that marks the caste of Mr. Lecky, and whilst he was the occasion of some of the more disgraceful scenes with which the Irish members endeavoured to effect their avowed purpose of degrading the House of Commons, he was at least an honest man. To what he regarded as the best interests of his country he gave up professional prospects, and for their sake gloried in social ostracism. Entering the House of Commons in the session of 1885, he found Mr. Parnell, actually on the edge of an abysmal chasm, apparently in the plenitude of his power. The Union of Hearts was then in fullest throb. Dr. Tanner was in his seat on that memorable March night in 1889 when, Mr. Parnell rising to address the

House, the whole Liberal party, headed by Mr. Gladstone, leaped to their feet and greeted the Irish leader with enthusiastic cheers. On the Front Opposition Bench only Lord Hartington, seated at the gangway end, kept his place, with folded arms, hat tilted over his nose, and a far-away look on his face.

That very morning the Royal Commission, assembling to hear Sir Charles Russell continue his cross-examination of Mr. Pigott, learned that the witness had fled. Above the storm of cheers with which the House of Commons greeted Mr. Parnell on this tragic breaking-down of the charges against him could be heard the stentorian voice of Dr. Tanner. He made up for this later when the débâcle burst in Committee Room No. 15. Then and thereafter he was prominent in his attacks on his former leader, who retorted by numbering him among the "gutter snipes."

A Midnight March.

It happened that at this historic epoch Dr. Tanner assumed a personally prominent part in the performance of the Irish Brigade at Westminster. A warrant being out for his arrest under the Crimes Act, he played fast and loose with the police, successfully evading their attention for a whole month. On this very night, when Mr. Parnell was the leading character in a never-to-be-forgotten scene, the Doctor succeeded in entering the sanctuary of the House of Commons. Once inside he was safe. But the police had drawn a cordon round Palace Yard, and by whatever exit he attempted to leave he would be arrested. There was no help for it. The dramatic instincts of the Irish Members suggested compensation in the way of appropriate surroundings. They would at least have their money's worth. The word was silently passed making a rendezvous in Palace Yard as soon as the House should be up.

At half-past twelve, Dr. Tanner, with head erect,

the light of battle in his eyes, walked down the broad stairway leading from the Lobby, past the ground-floor passage where carriages set down members, past the two burly policemen on guard at the entrance, and so into the arms of his escort. Forming in fours, with the Doctor in the centre they marched slowly out of Palace Yard, crossing the road in direction of the Westminster Palace Hotel. Presently through the still night uprose the Irish national hymn, wedded to the music of the American March.

> God save Ireland ! say we all,
> Whether on the gallows high, or on battlefield we die,
> What matter if for Ireland dear we fall ?

That was perhaps the proudest moment of Dr. Tanner's turbulent life. He was the hero of the midnight hour. His countrymen had flocked round him and, in the very centre of the capital of the hated Saxon, they were defying the police. What would happen if the myrmidons of the Home Secretary attempted to seize the member for Mid-Cork no one could exactly say. Presently fell over the procession the chilling thought that perhaps, after all, nothing would happen. The police, cowed by their manly bearing, had thought better of laying a hand on a free-born Irishman representative of an important constituency. The march slackened to give the laggard police fuller time to make up their minds. The jubilant shout, " God save Ireland ! " rose again and again. Nothing did happen, and Dr. Tanner was safely delivered at the hotel into the charge of the amazed night porter.

Standing bareheaded on the top of the steps, he addressed his countrymen, thanking them for their gallant bearing through a dangerous emprise. They had that night taught the English a lesson that would never be forgotten. The escort dispersing with a hearty cheer, the Doctor, what with burning patriotism

and the excitement of the evening, felt thirsty and went into the smoking-room to enjoy a last drink before retiring to rest. By curious prevision he found awaiting him there two strangers in morning dress who, producing their warrants, quietly carried him off in custody.

That was only a dozen years ago, when the Doctor was hale and hearty, in boisterous health of body and spirits. Last session there occasionally haunted the Lobby a shrunken figure, a haggard face, the ghost of the Member for Mid-Cork of the early nineties. Only once this session has he re-visited the familiar scene. No one who saw him then marvels that to-day he sleeps in Kensal Green, at rest at last.

May 14. Winston Churchill's Maiden Speech.

In debate on St. John Brodrick's scheme of Army Organization, Winston Churchill, lately returned for Oldham, made his maiden speech. In modest fashion, wherein a note of heredity is struck, the new member had proposed to himself to open and lead off the debate with an amendment condemning the scheme. The leader of the Opposition interposing, he necessarily gave way. Having prepared his speech, he delivered it, and has the satisfaction of reflecting that it totally eclipsed Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's effort.

It was, indeed, excellent alike in matter and in form, and has established the position of the young member for Oldham as a debater who will have to be reckoned with whatever Government is in office. Probably a Ministry composed of his own political friends have most to apprehend. No case is known in modern history or, indeed, in earlier Parliamentary records, where a striking personality is revived in the person of his offspring. We have to go back to the time of Pitt to find an instance where a great political personage was eclipsed by his son. Winston Churchill is not likely

to eclipse the fame of Randolph, who was a statesman as well as a consummate debater. Certainly, as far as he has gone, he recalls with singular fidelity the manner and method of his distinguished father.

Son and Father.

A Marvellous Memory. One priceless equipment for a Parliamentary career possessed by him is a phenomenal memory. In delivering his speech to-night he was evidently fully supplied with notes, but he did not use his manuscript for the purpose of reading a single sentence. I happened to sit next to him at dinner after his triumph in the House, and mentioned an incident observed in delivery of a speech of nearly an hour's duration. Quoting from the letter his father wrote to Lord Salisbury on the eve of Christmas, 1886, resigning the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, I noticed that when only half-way through the reading he closed the book and recited the closing passages.

"Yes," he said, "I felt it would be easier to recite the letter than to read it from a book held in my hand, so I learned it off."

He added that his speech, which, fully reported, filled three columns of close print, had all been written

out. He then learnt it off by heart, and delivered it as if it were an extemporaneous effort, a delusion artfully assisted by occasional interpolation of sparkling sentences referring to points made by speakers preceding him through the evening.

"If," he said, "I read a column of print four times over I commit it so perfectly to memory that I could forthwith recite it without an omission or error."

Mr. Gladstone's Strategy.

In this respect the young prodigy resembles rather Macaulay than Mr. Gladstone. The latter, it is true, had a wonderful memory, but it was not after this fashion verbal. A contrary impression was given by the fact that up to the close of his life in the House of Commons no one could misquote one of his speeches, however remote in point of date, however obscure in its relation with historic orations, without being pulled up and convicted of inaccuracy. I remember talking to Mr. Gladstone after one of these apparently phenomenal efforts of memory, expressing astonishment that, with furlongs of printed speeches by him to be found in *Hansard* and elsewhere, he could recall what he had said—or, to be precise, what he had not said—on a particular question at a specified date.

With that rare smile that illuminated his face when he was making confession, he said that in the particular case alluded to, as in most others of like character, he really remembered nothing of the passage quoted. The only thing that guided him in his detection of a misquotation or a misconstruction was that, his views on certain questions being clearly defined, he knew that he could not in any circumstances have expressed the opinion attributed to him. The context was sure to qualify or contradict the version read into it by the speaker whom he had pulled up.

CHAPTER VI

A DISCREDITED OPPOSITION

Mystery of a Ministerial Measure.—The Premier Cornered.—Surrender.—Flotsam and Jetsam.—A "Corner" in Corner Seats.—"Jemmy" Lowther.—The Position of Parties.—A hardy Joke.—The Good-natured Miller.—The Pro-Boer Party.—Going the whole Ass.—A discredited Opposition.

May 17. Mystery of a Ministerial Measure.

In the twilight of a May evening there was something touching in the spectacle of the Prime Minister and the Duke of Devonshire slumbering side by side on the Ministerial Bench in the House of Lords. One almost expected to see the Bishop of Winchester advance on tip-toe and cover them with leaves. Material was at hand in the amendment Paper issued with the right reverend prelate's Habitual Drunkards Bill. It was so bulky that, judiciously torn up, it would have served.

Forty Winks!

This measure was the immediate occasion of the Premier's lapse into grateful sleep. Since he returned

from brief holiday in the Sunny South the Licensing Question has relentlessly pursued him. It has always been a nuisance, peculiarly irritating to a statesman who objects to paternal government whatever form it takes, whether seats for shopgirls or the Early Closing of Shops. A right reverend brother of the Bishop of Winchester's, now no more, declared he would rather see England free than sober. Lord Salisbury is not always careful to conceal his preference for seeing England slightly inebriated rather than fettered on its frequent way to the public-house.

By a regretted oversight, for which the Premier chivalrously blames himself, there appeared in the King's Speech notification that "Legislation has been prepared, and if the time at your disposal proves to be adequate will be laid before you, for the prevention of drunkenness in licensed houses or public places." Weeks slipping by, months beginning to roll, and nothing more heard of the promised measure, advocates of temperance took the matter in hand. The Bishop of Winchester moved a resolution on the subject in the House of Lords. The Premier, waking up in a pause that followed one of the speeches, was exceeding wroth. What, he asked, was the use of framing and debating abstract resolutions? A man of business as differentiated from a Bishop would deal with the matter in a Bill.

The resolution thus bundled off the premises, Lord Salisbury thought that there, for this Session at least, was an end of the matter. Just as he was beginning to forget all about it, enter the Bishop of Winchester, carrying in arms practised at christening services an infant Bill dealing with the Habitual Drunkard!

The Premier Cornered.

How was such perversity to be met? The natural and accustomed course of procedure would be to bring in the Government measure

mentioned in the King's Speech, in which case the Bishop and his Bill would take a back seat. There was another course, novel, unprecedented. It was to leave the Government measure in the seclusion of the Home Office pigeon hole, adopt the Bishop of Winchester's Bill, reconstruct it from first clause to last, and place it in Ministerial charge.

Final decision on the matter seems to have been reached with the precipitancy that marked the creation of the Historical Ten Minutes' Reform Bill, the secret of whose birth was disclosed by the ingenuous Sir John Pakington. Certainly at the opening of Tuesday's sitting, when Lord Camperdown moved the second reading of the Licensing Boards Bill, the Premier was hopelessly uncertain as to where the Government stood in the matter of legislation on the drink question.

"Why," he forlornly asked, "should a Government attempt to impose upon the people cast-iron rules in a matter so entirely within their own judgment as the course they should pursue in satisfying their individual tastes?"

Swiftly his mind reverted to the epoch of the three-bottle man, "the class," he added, looking towards the bench of Bishops, "with which we ourselves are most familiar." Did the law attempt to wrest two bottles, or even one, out of the hand of our respected forbears of a hundred years ago? Certainly not. The desired reform in social manners was attained "by allowing the gradual growth of intelligence and education to guide them to make the choice which they can make and we cannot, and by that wise liberty to obtain the freedom from this evil which no paternal Government can ever achieve."

Surrender.

This passage indicates the frame of the Premier's mind when he spoke on Tuesday night. But there were those pesky Bishops and, more

immediately irritating, here was Lord Rosebery declining to permit him "to live in a hermitage contemplating the history of two centuries ago, and the genial habits of our forefathers." The noble Lord, sticking to the Premier with the persistence of the limpet, insisted upon some definite statement. Where was the Bill promised in the King's Speech? Was the Bishop of Winchester's legislative effort identical with the Home Secretary's? Was it to supersede it? Wherefore? and Why?

Cornered in this uncomfortable, not to say ungentlemanly manner, the worried Premier, abandoning the attitude of pleased contemplation of the three-bottle man era, put up Lord Belper to make definite announcement that a series of amendments would be drafted on Lord Winchester's Bill, which being transformed would be adopted by the Government and pressed forward in both Houses. As for that gem of purest ray serene, the Bill promised in the King's Speech, the dark unfathomed caves of the Home Office would continue to secrete it.

May 21. Flotsam and Jetsam. It happens just now that the flotsam and jetsam of Conservative Ministries is more than usual thickly strewn on the beach behind the Treasury Bench. The first thing an ex-Minister of Cabinet rank looks for on resuming his status of private member is a corner seat. The corner seat of the second bench behind that on which Ministers sit, teems with historic association. Thither Mr. Forster retired when he finally broke with Mr. Gladstone. Thence he rose, on May 4, 1882, to set forth the damaging reasons of his resignation. There he sat eleven days later, when the Kilmainham Treaty, signed by Mr. Parnell, and forwarded to the Cabinet through the agency of Captain O'Shea, was handed about from hand to hand, and discovery made that

Mr. Parnell, in reading to the House what purported to be the full text of the document, omitted the gist of it. This was the paragraph which, as Mr. Parnell's contribution to the bargain, undertook, on the part of himself and his friends, to "cordially co-operate with the Liberal party in forwarding Liberal principles."

A "Corner" In Corner Seats.

When, four years later, Ireland again being the disruptive influence, Lord Hartington, Mr. Chamberlain, and Sir Henry James withdrew from Mr. Gladstone's councils, there was created what on the Stock Exchange would be described as "a corner" in corner seats. There were not enough to go round. The one usually reserved for a Cabinet Minister temporarily retired from business was allotted to Lord Hartington, Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Henry James seating themselves in line with him. Sir James Fergusson, left out of Lord Salisbury's third Administration, was fortunate in finding another historic quarter unoccupied. He took it and fills it to this day.

When, at the opening of the present Parliament, Mr. Chaplin also found himself out in the cold, he showed disposition to claim the right of heritage. The first time the new House discovered the ex-President of the Local Government Board in Parliamentary mufti, he had come down early and secured Sir James' place. Conflict with a former colleague, who, as the man in possession, had the proverbial support of nine points of the law, was avoided by a happy accident. The corner seat on the same line below the gangway was vacated, when, at the General Election in October last year, Bodmin rejected Mr. Courtney. Mr. Chaplin crossed over, took it, and remains in undisputed possession, leaving Sir James Fergusson in peace.

Immediately behind him Mr. Chaplin enjoys the companionship of an esteemed colleague in the last

Ministry, one, indeed, who was his lieutenant in the Presidency of the Local Government Board. By virtue of regular attendance at prayer-time, Mr. T. W. Russell has secured this corner seat on the fourth bench, as good as any other for commanding the attention of the House when he has things to say pleasant for the hearing of former colleagues still seated on the Treasury Bench. For old members this place has recollections going back a period of thirty years. From it, when the Conservatives were in office, and from the corresponding position on the opposite side when they crossed the floor, rose the grey figure of Mr. Newdegate, red bandana in hand—the nearest approach, as Mr. Lowe said, permitted himself to association with the Scarlet Woman. It was from this coign of vantage that Mr. Newdegate one night gravely confided to a laughing House his suspicion that Mr. Whalley, always hot in denunciation of the Society of Jesus, was a Jesuit in disguise.

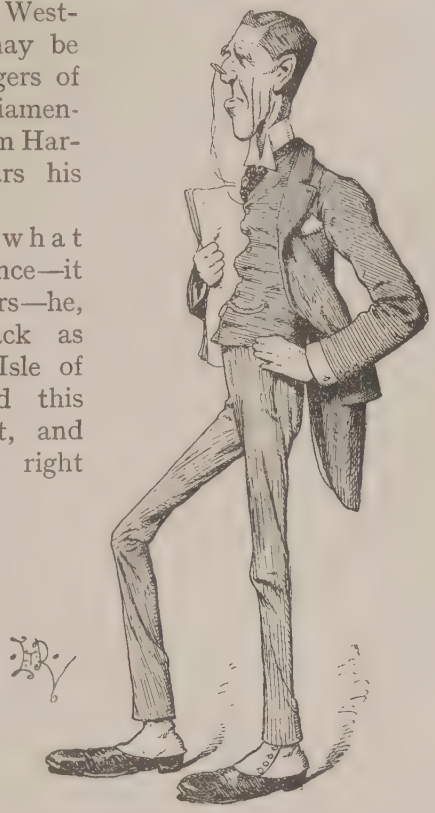
"Jemmy" Lowther.

Mr. Powell-Williams and Mr. Macartney —other splinters broken off the third Ministry of Lord Salisbury—are too modest to claim the right of a corner seat. They have not, ever since they left the Treasury Bench, taken up fixed quarters, either above or below the gangway.

At the corner of the front bench below the gangway is found the oldest specimen, whether of Ministerial flotsam or jetsam, the House has known. The Right Hon. James Lowther, affectionately known to two generations of House of Commons men as "Jemmy," took his seat on the Treasury Bench thirty-three years ago next August. If it were not for the condition that makes continuous sitting imperative, he would be in the running for the Fathership of the House. He is certainly one of the oldest members, a fact belied by almost boyish looks, born of good temper and

native light-heartedness. The number of members of the present House who were in it when the City of York sent him to Westminster, in 1865, may be counted on the fingers of one hand. In Parliamentary age Sir William Harcourt is three years his junior.

When, after what seemed long absence—it was only three years—he, in 1888, came back as member for the Isle of Thanet, he found this corner seat vacant, and none disputed his right to appropriate it. Thence, from time to time, when constitutional points are at issue, he rises and addresses an enthralled House with gravity that would befit the judicial bench.



"Jemmy" Lowther.

May 24. The Position of Parties. Ministers go off to-day on their Whitsun holidays cheered by triumphant defeat of the Opposition on the Budget Bill. The only thing that mars their pleasure is consciousness of the ease with which the crushing blow was dealt. It was like a navvy disabling an infant in a perambulator. There was about the business none of the delight of battle. How the episode came to be possible

is one of those inscrutable things that from time to time are produced from the Front Opposition Bench. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman is an old Parliamentary hand. It did not require one of his standing and experience to forecast the result of formally moving what is equivalent to a vote of censure on the Government. Waverers influenced by the coal duty, the sugar tax, or an uneasy feeling about the costly mismanagement of the war, were forthwith rallied to the flag of the Government. Since the Budget was introduced exceedingly few Ministerialists have supported it in debate. When it came to a division on a hostile motion moved from the Front Bench they voted to a man, and the Government majority, which has of late fallen to an extent that gave some uneasiness in Downing Street, flashed up far above its normal height.

Perhaps even more damaging and disheartening than the resuscitation of the Ministerial majority is the discovery attendant upon this week's proceedings in the House of Commons of hopeless dissension among the Liberals. Members who hold that the Boers have been in the right throughout the war, their own countrymen criminally in the wrong, declined to vote for an amendment moved by a member of the Front Bench who in respect of the war has supported Government policy. It must be said for Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's management of the affair, that had he asked Sir William Harcourt to take charge of the amendment, instead of Sir Henry Fowler, there would have been abstention by the other wing of the Liberal party. It is all very sad as seeming to defer to the Greek Kalends that rehabilitation of the Opposition which is essential to good government.

June 8. A Hardy Joke. One dull night in the House of Commons, in a session dead some twenty years, I observed Mr. Thomasson, at the time member for

Bolton, seated above the gangway attentively listening to a prosy member. The attitude was made more marked by the fact that he, being exceedingly deaf, was accustomed to bring with him down to the House an ear-trumpet. This was ingeniously disposed so as not to lose a drop of the precious rivulet of wisdom in counsel pouring from the lips of the members. Just then Lord Sherbrooke, recently raised to the peerage, returned to the scene of his earlier triumphs, looking down upon it from the Peers' Gallery. It occurred to me, bored to death with this man's dullness, what temporary advantages Mr. Thomasson's infirmity gave him in not being able to hear, and how deliberately he was wasting them. After a manner possibly not unfamiliar to readers of the "Diary of Toby, M.P.," a phrase conveying this fancy was put into the mouth of Lord Sherbrooke. The observation tickled public fancy, and had a considerable run.

When a year or two ago the Life of Lord Sherbrooke was written there appeared in it this remark attributed to that cynical statesman. I wrote to the biographer mentioning the origin of the story, and giving him the reference. I was interested and amused on receiving his reply to learn that, on looking through Lord Sherbrooke's papers, he found a memorandum in his own handwriting jotting down the remark as having been made by him to a colleague. He had so often heard it attributed to him that in the end he came honestly to believe that he had said it.

These accidental errors die hard. In looking through Grant Duff's *Notes from a Diary*, just published, I find the following entry:—"I had forgotten a remark of Lowe's of which Ashley reminded me. A very deaf M.P. was doing his best to catch with his ear-trumpet the words of an extremely dull speech. 'Just look at that foolish man,' said Lowe, 'throwing away his natural advantages.'"

Sic vos non vobis.

June 20. The Good-natured Miller.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman entering the House this evening when questions were called on turned in his accustomed seat and smiled genially on the riven ranks behind. One may smile, and smile and, as Hamlet observed, be a villain. It implies far deeper, richer lodes of good nature to smile and smile and be Leader of the Liberal Opposition. C.-B. can do it without effort or affectation. For Dr. Young there was

> A man I knew who lived upon a smile;
> And well it fed him. He looked plump and fair,
> While rankest venom foam'd through every vein.

C.-B. answers to the description of this anonymous person save in respect of the third line. Plump and fair, venom nor dances nor loiters through his veins.

If there were tendency in that direction it would surely be predominant at the present juncture. Since Lord Hartington gratefully returned the *bâton* of Leadership into the nervous grasp of Mr. Gladstone, no man has suffered in the same position equally with the present Leader of a distraught orchestra. Sir William Harcourt during his brief experiment did not find the position enviable. But Sir William when thwarted has a way of kicking out afore and ahint that removes him from the range of pity. He may be counted on to care for himself, and in a scrimmage to give as much as he takes—on occasion more. C.-B. would not hurt a fly, much less a Welsh member. A ripe scholar, one of the few men who can introduce a quotation from the classics without flushing, he, perhaps unconsciously, founds his Leadership upon one of the stories that delighted Athens three hundred years before the Christian Era. The fable of the good-natured miller, his son, and their ass might have been suggested to Æsop by contemplation of C.-B.'s method of leadership in general, with special refer-

ence to his attitude on the question of the war in South Africa.

Consider the ways of the miller. Starting on foot with his son (whether that part of the little drama be filled by Mr. John Morley or Sir Edward Grey is one of the essential dubieties of the piece) he was scolded by a troop of women into mounting his son on the ass. A fresh turn in criticism makes him dismount his son and ride himself.

"Why, you lazy old fellow," cried the next group of commentators, whether above or below the gangway is not mentioned, "how can you ride upon the beast while that poor little lad there can hardly keep pace by the side of you?"

Whereupon the miller takes the boy up behind, is straightway censured for overloading the beast, and is induced to assist in carrying it himself.

The Pro-Boer Party.

This is the stage Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman reached when he attended the meeting of amity and unity at the hospitable board spread in his honour yesterday week. Reproved then for hampering the pro-Boer Ass by sitting astride it, endeavouring to carry not one but two others—Sir Edward Grey in front and Mr. John Morley on the crupper—C.-B., ever anxious to please, resolved to dismount and at whatever cost help to carry the beast. His opportunity came on Monday night when the hot bloods of the pro-Boer party determined to force his hand. Mr. Lloyd-George, doubtless honestly desirous of obtaining information with respect to the condition of affairs in the Boer refugee camps, adopted a strange means to his end. Carefully concealing intention from the Minister directly concerned, he sprang debate upon him through the favourite Irish device of moving the adjournment. C.-B. attempted to excuse this procedure by pointing out that if

knowledge of the intention had been bruited a blocking notice would have been placed on the paper. Of course it would had the plot been disclosed in course of the preceding sitting. But there was no reason why, if information on a question of public interest was the sole or chief incentive to action, Mr. Brodrick might not have been privately informed on Monday morning, thus giving him at least a few hours to prepare his reply.

The Secretary of State knew nothing of the plot till it was sprung on him and the House. In what fuller measure the Leader of the Opposition had been taken into the confidence of the little party, the leadership of which is divided between Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Lloyd-George, and Mr. Willie Redmond, is a private affair of no material concern. The play's the thing, and the part the titular and responsible Leader of the Liberal party in the House of Commons took in the play that followed is a serious matter, fraught, as promptly appeared, with gravest consequences. The motion upon which the House divided was colourless. A mere formality dictated by technicalities it proposed "That this House do now adjourn." What the House actually divided upon was the speeches delivered by the mover and seconder of the motion, appropriately chorussed by the blatant denunciation of everything English, the unqualified approval of everything done by the armed enemies of England, delivered by Mr. W. Redmond in his most approved manner of Donnybrook Fair.

To cull a sentence from two of the speeches, Mr. Lloyd-George likened the treatment by Englishmen of the Boer women and children, deserted by their male protectors, to the dealings of Spain with the hapless Cubans. Mr. John Ellis, who has not even the excuse of Celtic blood, found in the condition of the refugee camps a parallel to the nameless horrors

of the Black Hole of Calcutta. This was what the House divided upon—approval or indignant repudiation of the slanders on absent, toil-worn men, still steadfast at the post of duty. What did the Leader of the Opposition do? He walked out into the Division Lobby at the tail of Mr. Lloyd-George and Mr. John Ellis, shoulder to shoulder with that "foreign element" whose existence in the House of Commons Mr. John Redmond early in the Session proudly boasted.

Going the Whole Ass.

This was carrying the Ass with a vengeance. Having made up his mind to what, varying the quotation, may be written as going the whole Ass, C.-B., with the approach of fierceness that marks the rare action of irresolute men, committed himself without compromise. It would have been easy for him to make a speech hesitating dislike of the action of the Government in the matter, winding up by announcing his intention of following the familiar path that would lead him out of the House without passing through the Division Lobby. Or, resolved to avoid reproach on that score, he might, whilst attacking the administration of the camps, have dissociated himself from the slanders of the mover and seconder of the motion. In such circumstances there would have been no ground for reproach if he had followed the instinct of a member of the Opposition and gone into the Lobby against the Government. It is probable that having done so he would have taken with him many of the Liberals who, after listening to his speech, felt bound to dissociate themselves from his leadership. He said not a single word in reproof or in mitigation of the venomous hysteria a body of English gentlemen listened to with a patience that is one of the marvels of the House of Commons.

A Discredited Opposition. Whilst the proceedings of Monday night, following close upon the performance of Friday in last week, have dealt a fresh and, for the time, a paralysing blow on the feeble body of the Liberal party, they are viewed with mixed feelings in the opposite camp. The extreme party man is inclined to chuckle over the advantage voluntarily tendered to the Government. More responsible men, amongst whom Mr. Arthur Balfour may be pointedly mentioned, view the fatuity with profound regret. Regarded strictly from a party point of view a well-led, capable, and moderately numerous Opposition is greatly to be desired. Its absence is seen in the lassitude in which the House of Commons is just now steeped, in the loosening of the bonds of discipline which results in perilously small majorities on chance divisions.

The Parliamentary Opposition, regarded as a fighting force, did not amount to very much a week ago. To-day it is a negligible quantity, an object of mingled pity and derision. Throughout his Fourth Administration Lord Salisbury has been accompanied by a run of good luck which finds no parallel in history. It is not too much to say that had Mr. Gladstone been alive and in the prime of his power during the last six years, there was more than one occasion upon which the Ministry, in spite of an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons, would have been turned adrift. Their blunders alike in the Far East and in South Africa, in Home Legislation and in Finance, have been gross and frequent. Testimony on this point is abundant from the lips and pens of faithful Unionists. Yet to-day, following on the proceedings of Monday night, Lord Salisbury, entering on his Fourth Administration after a continuous term of power extending over six years, is, thanks to the Front Opposition Bench, stronger than ever.

It will be remembered that, after the catastrophe on the bridge over which the Good-Natured Miller and his son were carrying the ass, "the old man, vexed and ashamed, made the best of his way home again, convinced that by endeavouring to please everybody he had pleased nobody, and lost his ass into the bargain." In some editions of Æsop a moral is tagged to the end of each fable. It would here be superfluous.

CHAPTER VII

WAR TO THE KNIFE AND FORK

Tea on the Terrace.—The Peers' Portion.—Earl Russell at the Bar.—In camera.—War to the Knife and Fork.—A Tiers Parti.—The Rival Feast.

June 27. Tea on the Terrace.

The Moorish Ambassador and his secretary, standing this afternoon on the doorway by the Terrace, their spotless white robes adding a fresh touch of coolness to the promenade, looked upon a unique spectacle. They had come down to see the Mother of Parliaments at work. To begin with, they took their seats in the Diplomatic Gallery of the House of Commons, and had explained to them the mystery whereby a private Bill referring to an obscure locality in Ireland may take precedence of public business, and delay important discussion for the space of two hours. Next they were escorted to the House of Lords, where they sat for a time enthralled whilst the County Council (Bye-Laws) Bill passed the critical stage of a third reading. This, according to ordinary acceptance of the phrase, was "seeing the Houses of Parliament." But it was felt that till they had visited the Terrace on the stroke of five o'clock on a summer afternoon experience fell far short of realization of Parliamentary life.

The view from the Terrace in the afternoon fully shares the claim to surpassing beauty Wordsworth acknowledged as he drove over the neighbouring

Westminster Bridge on an early September morning in 1803. To-day the Moors saw it under the disadvantage of low tide. No barges with softly-hued sails were passing up or down, nor were there, as have been seen in more fruitful seasons, boats with high deck cargoes of sweet-scented hay, floating down from meadows far up the river. But there in the sunlight, on the other side, stood the old tower of Lambeth Palace; below, to the east, was Westminster Bridge, with its ceaseless tide of humanity; opposite was St. Thomas's Hospital, mellowed in the westering sunlight. (It is, by the way, of these buildings that an American lady, taking tea on the Terrace last year, inquired, "Are those the houses of your aristocracy?")

There are members of the present House of Commons who can recall the days when the Terrace was a desert. Occasionally, more especially after dinner on summer nights, men strolled forth to take their cigar. More rarely ladies who had been dining at the House with their husbands, fathers, or brothers took coffee outside. But these were episodes, as distinct from custom. It was in the Parliament which witnessed the birth of the Unionist party that the now popular tea on the Terrace was established. It rapidly grew till it reached the proportions of the spectacle revealed this afternoon, to the mild surprise of the white-robed visitors from Morocco.

At the beginning of last Parliament some members attempted to stem the current. They met with no fuller measure of success than did Mrs. Partington in her historic encounter with the Atlantic. The Speaker was privately urged to enact a system of ballot for admission akin to that in operation in the Ladies' Gallery. A wise and prudent man, the right hon. gentleman declined to take any such step. It was represented that legislators hurrying to the Divi-

sion Lobby at the sound of the bell were hampered on their passage up the stairways by ladies passing to and from the Terrace. That objection was met by the construction of a special staircase leading from the Terrace, exclusively reserved for the use of visitors.

Another concession made to the prejudices of a limited class of members was the reservation of a portion of the Terrace for their seclusion. This space is marked off on the eastern side of the stairway leading from the main Lobby. An upright signboard, modelled on those in use in the streets when the roadway is up, sternly proclaims that the quarter is "For Members Only." Summer-frocked Peris may, if they find attraction, stand by the gates of this Paradise. But they must not cross its border. It must be said that it is the least frequented portion of the long line of the Terrace, and is in all respects gloomiest of aspect.

The Peers' Portion. It is not generally known that a portion of the Terrace is the perquisite of the peers. The far western end, skirting the wall of their House, is reserved for them, but is rarely used. There is a tradition that the Lord High Chancellor was once seen at a table here, pouring tea out of a brown pot for the delectation of a company of ladies. That was all very well for the Lord Chancellor, who must in all circumstances maintain the aloofness necessitated by his high estate. Ordinary peers, staying for tea on the terrace, prefer to accept the hospitality of the Commons, in company with the bevies of ladies crowding the tables set in double line farther to the eastward. No one remember to have seen Mr. Gladstone whiling half an hour away on the terrace. But his Majesty's present Ministers are frequent attendants. Mr. Chamberlain, when not presiding at a tea-table of his own,

usually joins the group of smokers clustered by the space reserved for members. Mr. Balfour, generally hatless, flits about from table to table, carrying sunshine wherever he goes.

Tea on the Terrace has now become a regular function of London society. The main drawbacks are the difficulty of securing tables, and the treachery of English weather. To make sure of his opportunity, the wise member engages a table at least two days in advance. It is quite hopeless, especially on a fine afternoon like this, to come down casually and order tea for four or six. At the same time system may be carried to extreme. Three sessions ago discovery was made that the wife of an esteemed member had engraved cards of invitation to "tea on the Terrace," proposing to have a regular series of at least two a week as long as the weather held up. This generous impulse of hospitality was gently but firmly repelled by high authority.

As to the weather, that, like reading and writing, comes by nature, and is beyond the control of man, or even woman. On sultry afternoons the Terrace is certainly the coolest spot in London. When the plans for the Palace of Westminster were devised, the architect had not in his mind the comfort and convenience of tea-drinkers at the opening of the twentieth century. But Sir Charles Barry built wiser than he knew. At the approach to the sacred hour of tea the Terrace falls into quiet shade. If elsewhere, in park or Piccadilly, there is not a breath of air stirring, be sure that on the Terrace of the House of Commons a refreshing breeze steals along from the river. There are times, as happened on an afternoon last week, when the shade grows blacker, and out of it falls a flood of rain. Then is beheld a quick transformation scene—the ladies skipping to the doorways for shelter, hon. members gallantly doing their best to save the

wreck of dishes of strawberries and avert the ruin of plates of hot buttered buns.

July 2. Earl Russell at the Bar. Earl Russell having been committed for trial on a charge of bigamy claims the ancient privilege of being tried by his peers. The case came on in preliminary style in the Lords to-day, proceedings being conducted in camera. Word of what was to the fore was quietly passed round among the peers, and some hundred, a quite unusual number to be found at four o'clock, assembled. The Lord Chancellor was on the Woolsack. Contrary to usage, he wore, not his full-bottomed wig, but a black cap, a sign ominous to those familiar with a certain episode in Criminal Courts of Justice.

Shortly after four o'clock Black Rod appeared at the bar, accompanied by a still youthful figure, his buttonhole adorned with a flower. That was the sole trace of gaiety in his bearing. Advancing within the bar, withdrawn in preparation for the scene, Earl Russell—for it was he—advanced a pace and bent low, almost to his knees. The Lord Chancellor, bidding him rise, read a notification that had reached him of the committal of the noble Earl for trial on a charge of bigamy. The question before the House of Lords to-day was that of bail. Earl Russell was directed to withdraw in custody of Black Rod. A conversation led by the Lord Chancellor followed. Black Rod, again summoned, returned with his prisoner. The Lord Chancellor, addressing "John Francis Stanley, Earl Russell," informed him that bail would be accepted, and Black Rod was notified that the prisoner was released from his custody. Thereupon Earl Russell and Black Rod, making obeisance towards the Woolsack, retired, and the Press Gallery doors being unlocked public business was entered upon.

July 26. War to the Knife and Fork.

To dine or not to dine, that is the question. Whether 'tis nobler to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous John Morley, or, to take a room at the Hotel Cecil, invite Asquith to dinner and make things hot for our pro-Boer brethren. Thus did Shakespeare in a little-known folio edition forecast the dilemma of the Liberal party to-day. Within its ranks the lover of the gentle Boer, the contemnor of anything British, has had his day and his dinner. The unsuspecting titular Leader of the United Party was lured within the walls of the Banquetting Hall and, chameleon like, took on for the time its political hue. The gathering posed as the only and original Liberal party. (N.B.—No connexion with the shop next door.) Mr. Morley in the ecstasy of the moment went so far as to assume that the majority of the Opposition, repentant of patriotism, were now chiefly desirous of convenient opportunity to recant and deck themselves with the Transvaal colours.

That was the head and front of the offending. It is curious to reflect how accidental was the turn in events that may be fraught with lasting injury to what once was a great political party. The Holborn Restaurant dinner given in honour of C.-B. was not Mr. John Morley's funeral. He was there as an accessory. The toast list provided no opening for a speech from him. The chief attraction of the evening, as announced on the bills, were those Bounding Brothers, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Sir William Harcourt, who, with arms entwined in fraternal fashion familiar in the ring, were to illustrate afresh the ancient axiom that Unity is Strength. It was Sir William Harcourt who dragged in Mr. John Morley, and thereby, undesignedly, alien to his daily habit, tipped the fat into the fire. Oozing with loving-kindness, mellow with reconciliation, his eye fell upon the other member of his party on the Front Opposition Bench, and lifting

up his hands he blessed him. What he had said about C.-B. varied from earlier attitude towards the same inoffensive figure. It is equally true that when Mr. John Morley sat with him in Cabinet Councils presided over by Lord Rosebery, personal intercourse was not absolutely free from friction. Now in the hallowed walls of Holborn Restaurant his heart went forth to his old companion, whom he hailed as the Bayard of politics.

In these touching circumstances Mr. Morley could do nothing less than deliver an impromptu speech, which probably verified the expectations of the old Parliamentary Hand who evoked it. However that be, it accentuated the angry feeling within the Liberal fold, hopelessly widening a chasm that some, concerned chiefly for the welfare of the party, had hitherto succeeded in decently bridging. Mr. Asquith picked up the glove, and vigorously flung it back in the face of the challenger. Now the hot bloods of the party are for war to the knife—and fork. If their pro-Boer brethren had a dinner at the Holborn Restaurant, where Mr. John Morley had his fling, why should not the patriot band have their dinner at the Hotel Cecil, and talk at their brethren whilst they extol Mr. Asquith ?

A Tiers Parti.

The situation here described has revealed a new thing in this wonderful Opposition. In the aggregate, with every man mustered (as Mr. Gladstone said when he sat down to dinner with the late Mr. Colman) it does not come to much in the way of numbers. Divided into two sections, labelled Patriot and Pro-Boer, it becomes impotent for effective Parliamentary purpose. Since the Asquith dinner was proposed it has been made known that there is a third party in the scanty battalions of the Liberal camp. They call themselves the Centrals, which means that their pathway is *juste milieu*, and they the pinks of

perfection. Sir William Harcourt and Mr. John Morley may, with the extravagance of youth, lean too much on one side. Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey, neither of whom was ever young, may stray a dangerous pace over the other border line. The Centrals, like the keel of a ship, are mathematically in the middle, and keep the structure, however crank, from toppling over. "No doubt, but ye are the people and wisdom shall die with you," Job, in rare access of impatience, remarked to his three friends who sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights.

Job is, when we come to think of it, a fine type of the Liberal party in these long days of tribulation. In the Centrals, the plagued and wearied veteran finds its Eliphaz the Temanite, its Bildad the Shuhite, and eke Zophar the Naamathite. They are ready to put the broken-down old Party right on every point, and are not lacking in counsel in the matter of the Asquith dinner.

By this time probably the proposed guest of the evening has had laid before him the views of these authorities; for "who can withhold himself from speaking?" As the procedure of sitting on the ground by Mr. Asquith for seven days and seven nights might attract inconvenient attention in Cavendish Square, the counsel tendered at this juncture will take the form of what is vulgarly known as a round-robin. It will be pointed out to the Member for East Fife that things are pretty straight as far as they have gone. At the Holborn Restaurant dinner Mr. Morley pleasingly pictured the majority of the Liberal Opposition in the robes of the Moorish Ambassador, wailing "Peccavi!" forasmuch as they had stood by their countrymen fighting in South Africa for the existence of the Empire. Mr. Asquith, in one of those masterpieces of lucid, straightforward, brief speech that come easy to him, shattered the idle fancy, and unmistakably

re-asserted the position of the main body of Liberals in the House, and through the country. Let the matter rest there, say the Centrals. Why further aggravate our pro-Boer brethren, making what may prove only a temporary split in the Party an impassable chasm ?

The Rival Feast.

There is much to be said for this view of the matter. A fatal objection is that it is adopted too late. If the main body of the Liberal Opposition had taken counsel together, quietly considering the proposal to hang out their flag on the battlements of the Hotel Cecil in response to the trumpet-call from the Holborn Restaurant, it is probable the project would have been snubbed. No one more decidedly than Mr. Asquith would have declared against it. But that is not the way good Liberals conduct their business. Wherever two or three of them are met together they straightway, in their own estimation, become the Liberal party, authorised to speak in its name. The first intimation the majority of Imperialist Liberals had of the proposed banquet was the announcement in Thursday morning's paper that it was to be held on a stated date in a specified locality. This premature announcement of a hastily concerted project ought never to have been made. Having been announced, to retire from it would be a sign of indecision that would complete the innate ridiculousness of the situation.

Not the least comical feature in the farce is the horror with which the friends of Sir William Harcourt and Mr. John Morley regard the proposal to do honour to Mr. Asquith at the shrine of the dinner-table. It is, they cry aloud, in constitutionally hysterical manner, an act of treason to the Liberal party. It is a blow that will shatter hope of final reconciliation. That is all very well, but who began this new political manœuvre of dining out to damn your friends ? The pro-

Boers have had their dinner and said their say. They were even privileged to capture the leader of a bifurcated Opposition, and temporarily exhibit him as exclusively their own. They are the last people in the world to whimper, because, having thus hit their brother a back-hander, he proposes to smite back. Deep answers to deep. The dinner at the Hotel Cecil is the retort, more or less courteous, to the banquet at the Holborn Restaurant.

Of all men the feasters at the latter hostelry have the least right to complain. Where complaint is just and sore is in the heart of those zealous for the high renown of the Liberal party, anxious in the best interests of the State that there should be in the House of Commons an Opposition which, however small in numbers, has the power to make itself respected. The events of the past fortnight, culminating in the controversy round the Asquith banquet, makes the dispassionate onlooker despair of the future of Liberalism. Early in the career of Lord Salisbury's Third Administration Lord Rosebery observed to a friend, "If they only threw over the Opposition Bench an old pair of Mr. Gladstone's trousers, this Government would be out in a week." It is true that at the time Sir William Harcourt filled the place of Leader of the Opposition, a circumstance that may not have been wholly out of Lord Rosebery's mind when he made the caustic remark. But there are profound depths of truth in it. During the last six years there have been recurrent episodes when, with Mr. Gladstone in his prime, the overweening majority of Lord Salisbury would have been overthrown as certainly as an almost equally powerful force was destroyed at the polls in 1880. To-day, under hydra-headed leadership, Liberals are too busily occupied in cutting each other's throats to entertain thought of common action against the ancient enemy.

CHAPTER VIII

Re-forming at the Reform.—C.-B. and his "Followers."—Who else is there?—Box and Cox satisfied.—Those Dinners again.—Morley's Life of Gladstone.—The Coronation Oath.—Diogenes of Dalmeny.—Erratum.—Harsh Truths.—Declaration on Accession.

July 5. Re-forming at the Reform.

It is in accordance with old tradition that, when there is a difficulty about the leadership of the Liberal party, members should gather at the Reform Club and discuss it. Twenty-six years ago last February there was such occasion when Mr. Gladstone, having come to the conclusion that "at my time of life" further active participation in political affairs was undesirable, retired from the leadership, giving place to Lord Hartington. Liberals in the smoke-room of the Reform next Tuesday will have time for reflection upon all that might have happened for the Party and for England, supposing the intention communicated to Lord Granville from "11, Carlton House Terrace, S.W., January 13, 1875," had been carried out.

The last meeting in the historic series was held so recently as February, 1899. The Liberal party were again in dire distress. Sir William Harcourt had had enough of the thankless task of attempting to lead the Opposition. C.-B. was turned to as being not only the oldest Parliamentary Hand available, but as the man who would least divide a sensitive or-

ganization. The post was not tempting to any one as long as there was anywhere to be had the sweeping of a street crossing. Least of all men was it attractive for C.-B. Of assured position, wealthy, popular, disposed to enjoy the quiet things of life, he was the last man to hanker after a position that worried Mr. Gladstone up to death's door, and soured the milk of human kindness even in the breast of Sir William Harcourt. Yielding to impulse of self-sacrifice and loyalty to his party, he consented to wear the prickly honour thrust upon him. But in announcing his acceptance to the Reform Club meeting, he ventured to plead for a little toleration for the new Leader. Of course on matters of conscience and principle, individual members must steer their own course. But really, on questions of procedure and of tactics the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons would expect to be followed in dumb obedience.

C.-B. and his "Followers."

How has Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman been treated by the party for whom he made colossal sacrifice? The question is answered in a single word. Abominably. Time after time his authority has been flouted amid the jeers of watchful Ministerialists. On important divisions he has seen not only so-called followers below and above the Gangway go into the lobby opposite the one he walked into, but colleagues on the Front Bench have equally, in even more marked manner, affronted him.

There is a matter that to the outsider may seem of small importance, but to the older generation of House of Commons men it is significant of fundamental change. It is part of the duty of the Leader of the Opposition from time to time to question the Leader of the House as to the appointed course of public business. Mr. Disraeli or Mr. Gladstone, occupying C.-B.'s position, would have stared in angered amazement at

a private member taking upon himself this function of leadership. In these days the Leader of the Opposition rarely gets a chance. Members above the Gangway and below it, habitually jump up and forestall inquiry addressed to Mr. Arthur Balfour.

That C.-B. has so long borne what has come to be the indignity of the post of Leader of the Liberal Opposition is crowning testimony to his impregnable good humour, his patience, and his courage. But even a Campbell-Bannerman will turn at last. The revolt of the most important and influential section of the party, following on his appearance at the Holborn Restaurant dinner, convinced him that affairs had at length reached a crisis it would be folly to attempt to skirt. Hence the meeting at the Reform Club on Tuesday, avowedly summoned to consider a condition of affairs within the ranks of the Liberal party at length grown intolerable even for a man of adamantine urbanity. There is no difficulty in forecasting its result. C.-B. is as indispensable to the Opposition to-day as he was in February two years ago. There is no rival candidate for the post he fills. His followers do not want to get rid of him. They only ask that they may be permitted to continue to flout his nominal authority without awkward tokens of resentment on his part.

"I will do anything you like in reasol, M'ria; but I will not come 'ome." Thus the head of a British household in one of Phil May's *Punch* pictures, intercepted by his wife at the door of a public house.

"We will do anything in reason," say the freeborn members of the Opposition; "but we will not follow our leader."

Whether Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman intends to give the Party another chance is a secret at present locked in his own bosom. One who has seen all he has undeservedly suffered during the past three sessions could almost wish that he would leave those

responsible for it to the consequences of their petty perversity. Of a more generous mould, he will doubtless permit himself to be lured back to the labouring oar in a cranky boat mutinously manned. He will hear from successive speakers what is really true, though an observer would never suspect it, that he is the object of profoundest esteem, almost of veneration. Nobody meant anything when they differed from him in debate, parted from him on the way to division lobbies, or spoke at him at dinners in town and country. Some natural tears will be shed, and lasting reconciliation will be proclaimed.

> Then blessings on the falling-out
> That all the more endears,
> When we fall out with those we love
> And kiss again with tears.

Who else is there?

Supposing, on the other hand, C.-B. presents himself in more adamantine mood, declares he has had enough of the business, and insists on resigning. Who will succeed him?

Looking along the Front Bench the prospect is blank. Sir William Harcourt is a burnt child who dreads the fire. Mr. John Morley is much more usefully engaged in his study at Hawarden than in endeavouring to show how a historic Party ought to be led. It is easier to show how it ought not. Salmon-fishing is at hand, and Sir Edward Grey would not barter the chance of landing a nine-pounder for the most dazzling political advancement. If he were ten years younger, and inoculated with a dash of audacity, Sir Henry Fowler would be an admirable leader. Mr. Asquith, who was not born yesterday, is not disposed to imperil future chances by making a false step now.

The truth is Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman must stay where he is, because there is no one to replace him, a fact that makes meaner and more amazing the in-

gratitude with which he has been treated since he gave up to the Liberal party what was meant for Marienbad and Meigle. What will happen on Tuesday will be a chorus of protest that nobody meant anything by whatever they may have said, and that next to his God and his country the place nearest the heart of the Liberal M.P.—English, Scotch, or Welsh—is reserved for his honoured leader. C.-B. will consent to go on in the old way, and a fortnight later matters will do the same. There will be revolt on the floor of the House, and cabal in the Tea-room.

July 9. Box and Cox satisfied.

The meeting at the Reform Club reached the conclusion generally expected. The smoke-room was filled, its habitual frequenters after the luncheon hour grumbling in the smaller smoke-room. Every one was in the highest spirits, all inspired by brotherly love, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was greeted with enthusiasm, and a vote of confidence was unanimously passed. That is a brief, but faithful, record of what passed in the hour and a half that the historical Liberal Club was in the hands of the Liberal party. As to practical result following on the meeting I am afraid it will prove the most inconsiderable feature in the performance. It was demonstrated that C.-B. stood without a rival in the thankless post of leader of the Opposition. He is indispensable and inevitable ; but that was known before the meeting took place. It was acknowledged through the period when the leader was subjected to treatment at the hands of his nominal followers which drove him to demand a vote of confidence.

A curious, apparently a happy, conclusion of the matter is that of the three sections into which the Liberal Opposition in the House of Commons is divided all claim to be well satisfied with the result of the meet-

ing. The followers of Sir William Harcourt and Mr. John Morley say the reception accorded to C.-B. approves his action and speech at the Restaurant dinner. The central party, composed of the forty members, who wrote to Mr. Asquith deprecating the Hotel Cecil dinner, claim that their moderating influence has influenced to-day the unanimity of meeting. The section who find their exponents in Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey insist that they have won the day, since they drew from the nominal leader of the united party admission of their right to support the South African policy of the Government without being accused of treachery to the Liberal cause.

This last certainly has the fullest measure of fact on its side. Mr. Asquith, even more emphatically Sir Edward Grey, insisted on their right, whilst ranking as loyal members of the Liberal Opposition, to express their views on the settlement in South Africa, a position C.-B. in his closing speech formally conceded.

July 11. Those Dinners Again.

One not illogical conclusion arrived at as a result of the Reform Club meeting was that members of the Opposition might attend the Asquith dinner without suspicion of unfriendliness to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. A considerable number of the forty members who subscribed the protest addressed to Mr. Asquith against the Hotel Cecil dinner expressed that view on their own behalf. Before finally deciding it was thought proper to consult C.-B., and an interview took place this morning.

Sir Henry expressed himself unaltered in his attitude towards the dinner. He disclaimed personal feeling towards Mr. Asquith, or doubt of his friendliness. But the Hotel Cecil dinner was ostensibly devised as a counterblast to the Holborn Restaurant banquet, and was consequently intended as a censure upon the leader

of the Opposition, who was present, and delivered a speech. If the dinner were postponed till the recess this particular character would be mitigated, and Sir Henry would not only approve Liberals being present to do honour to Mr. Asquith, but would himself attend.

The result of the meeting is that the so-called central body of the Opposition will abstain from attending the dinner, a circumstance which affords early proof of the soundness of the conviction that the Reform Club meeting left matters much as they stood before it was summoned.

July 12. Morley's Life of Gladstone.

Mr. John Morley, happy in his work at Hawarden, where he is busy with his *Life of Gladstone*, has been absent from the various party meetings, private and public, social and political, that have marked a busy week. He does not intend to return to Westminster this session.

Talking with a friend before he left town about his literary work, he said his labour was greatly lessened by Mr. Gladstone's personal habits of order and regularity. Through the last sixty years of his career he not only preserved every important letter or document that reached him, but neatly endorsed it with his own hand, and stowed it away in order of date. Herein he differed from Lord Beaconsfield's practice. Lord Beaconsfield also preserved nearly every scrap of paper that reached him from important correspondents. But he chucked them pell mell into a box, and when one was filled it was locked up and another taken in hand. It is contemplation of this collection of boxes that has chilled the biographical zeal of Lord Rowton.

When preparing an important speech it was Mr. Gladstone's habit to note down in order certain facts and statements he designed to set forth in support of his arguments. He never wrote out a phrase.

"If I have the bare facts before me," he once said to Mr. Morley, "I can trust to the inspiration of the moment to find phrases in which to clothe them."

Amongst the papers docketed and stored at Hawarden in order of date Mr. Morley found notes of a speech delivered by Mr. Gladstone at the Oxford Union just seventy years ago. The subject was Catholic emancipation, and the occasion a vote of want of confidence in the Government of Earl Grey moved by the budding statesman. Mr. Gladstone was in those days as strongly opposed to Catholic emancipation as had been George IV.

July 17. The Coronation Oath.

A member of the Select Committee on the King's Declaration on his accession tells me of a curious and significant episode in its brief sitting. When the report was drafted and submitted by the Lord Chancellor, the Duke of Argyll moved an amendment dispensing altogether with the obnoxious Declaration, letting the Coronation Oath serve all purposes of the character for which it was designed. On a division the Duke was in a minority of one.

Coming from any of the carefully-selected body who formed the Committee, such action would have been notable. Undertaken by the brother-in-law of the King it was significant, and had it been generally known in the House of Lords during debate last Monday might have affected the issue. It seems reasonable to suppose that the Duke would not have taken so important a step without assurance that it was not out of harmony with His Majesty's views.

July 19. Diogenes of Dalmeny.

Since death removed Mr. Gladstone from the stage of Liberal politics Lord Rosebery's figure has loomed largest in the popular mind. There has never been any question that had

he enjoyed the advantage of a seat in the House of Commons he would have been hailed as the Elisha of the dead-and-gone Elijah. Handicapped as he was with a peerage he almost by common consent assumed the mantle. The individual dissent, it is true, was vital, and after a brief time brought about disintegration in the council chamber of the Liberal party and sowed the seeds of the disaster that has since attended it. But if Lord Rosebery had cared to put his back to the wall and fight out the personal question he would certainly have won the day. Whether from pride or indifference he declined the combat, and retired to his tub, whence from time to time he emerges to ruffle the dovecotes in Parliament Street.

Erratum.

When Diogenes, visiting Athens, offered himself as a disciple of Antisthenes, that estimable cynic, it is recorded, used his stick upon the new comer.

"Strike me, Antisthenes," said Diogenes, with the calm dignity that pertains to the favourite character, "but never shall you find a stick sufficiently hard to remove me from your presence whilst there is anything to be learned, any information to be gained, from your conversation and acquaintance."

It will probably be found on reference to the original that in the hurry or ignorance of the translator the personal pronoun has been mixed up. What Diogenes more probably said was, "Whilst there is anything to be learned, any information to be gained from *my* conversation and acquaintance."

This view finds confirmation in the sentence from his letter to the City Liberal Club, in which Lord Rosebery, with characteristic felicity of phrase, defines the position and mission of the Twentieth Century Diogenes. "I believe," he wrote, "that there is a useful and uncoveted place in the Commonwealth for one who having

held high office and having no desire to hold it again can speak his mind with absolute independence."

There is nothing here, it will be observed, about "anything to be learned, any information to be gained from the conversation and acquaintance" of others.

Harsh Truths. It would be idle to attempt to hide the fact that the latest deliverance of the Diogenes of Dalmeny has given deep offence to the political party on whose behoof it was written. Lord Rosebery's speeches or letters appearing, generally unexpectedly, at critical moments, are never lacking in point and severity of criticism. Heretofore they have been more easily borne, even welcomed, since the criticism was directed against somebody else, either the Government or an extreme and inconsiderable section of the Liberal party. In his letter to the City Liberal Club Lord Rosebery goes straight for the party as a whole, and almost literally smashes it.

"What is the attitude of the Liberal party?" he asks, and answers, "Neutrality and an open mind. Now I contend that this is an impossible attitude, and only spells Liberal impotence. No party can exist on such conditions."

The aggravation of the assault is increased by the circumstances of the hour. The dismemberment of the Liberal party following on Mr. Gladstone's nailing the Home Rule flag to the mast made possible all that has since followed at Westminster and in Downing Street. Not recovered from the blow then dealt, the party is now threatened with another that, delivered, will prostrate it for at least another quarter of a century.

It required much courage on the part of a man in Lord Rosebery's position ruthlessly to probe the widening wound. It would have been so easy to remain quiescent, listening whilst others cried Peace, peace, when there is no peace. Such an attitude was,

however, not consonant with the character of Diogenes. It is no use keeping a tub if you don't from time to time roll it about the public thoroughfares, and, setting it on end, address passers-by from its eminence.

July 23. Declaration on Accession.

The inwardness of the dealings of His Majesty's Government with the delicate question of the phrasing of the Sovereign's Declaration of Accession is past finding out. When attention was first called to the matter Mr. Balfour in his airy fashion pooh-poohed it. It really meant nothing. It was a relic of old times, like the "Oyez, oyez," with which Criminal Courts are opened. It had existed for hundreds of years, and no one was a penny the worse. Moreover the mischief was done as far as the present reign is concerned. The question might very properly come up on the next Accession. Sufficient to the day are the Parliamentary questions thereof.

It soon appeared that the hurt was more deeply rooted than it was convenient for the First Lord of the Treasury to assume. Even the noisy championship of the Irish members could not belittle the grievance. As it grew in force day by day recourse was had to the expedient of weak Ministries. A Select Committee was appointed to inquire into the matter. Here began the blundering that has dogged its footsteps. Being essentially a theological topic, the Committee was exclusively composed of laymen. Bishops are, after all, almost human, and this slight sufficed to set up the back of the Episcopal Bench. With a light heart the Lord Chancellor undertook to settle the matter for the Committee over which he presided. He submitted an amendment of the Declaration, which, according to the general view alike in the Protestant and Catholic camps, made it something worse. When the recommendation of the Committee

was laid on the Table of the House of Lords, and the Archbishop of Canterbury and Earl Grey showed a disposition to discuss it, the Lord Chancellor pounced upon them with the awful majesty of his wrath. Foiled in attempt to burk debate, he, when it had gone forward for a space of two hours, declared that the whole of the proceedings were out of order.

Nothing more was heard of the matter till to-day, when it cropped up again. On the recommendations of the Committee, further tinkered, was based a Bill, the second reading of which Lord Salisbury moved in a fumbling speech. With quaint petulance he complained of the accidental character of the dilemma in which the best of all Governments found itself.

"Until it was discussed on the King's Accession," he said, "I do not think the majority of the people in any part of the Empire knew the kind of Declaration which the Sovereign was forced to take."

Just as M. Jourdain had been talking prose all his life without knowing it, so, since the time of Charles II., the English people have quietly lived under a succession of Sovereigns who made this identical Declaration, and no one uttered a word in protest. Since, however, those pestilent newspapers published the text, the Catholic subjects of His Majesty were deeply wounded. The Premier brought down with him an embarrassing mass of proof of this state of feeling all over the Empire. Mauritius cried aloud in protest. Canada answered the call across the seas. The Catholic community of Malta, protesting their loyalty to the Throne, bluntly demanded the abolition of the objectionable Declaration.

"I cannot read the terms of the memorial," said the Premier, finding fresh ground of personal annoyance, "because it is written in Italian."

But there it was, and he forlornly turned over the leaves of the handsomely bound photographic album

which our Maltese fellow-citizens cunningly utilized for the purpose of their memorial.

Debate following on the Premier's speech disclosed existence of unmodified objection to the whole business. On a division, the second reading of the Bill was carried by a majority of 90 in a House of 102 Members. But that is no reliable indication of the state of feeling. The Bill will, of course, pass the House of Lords if the Marquis of Salisbury sets his mind upon the achievement. As it does not deal with rents, or, directly, with the Church, he can confidently count upon a majority. But if it is to be introduced in the House of Commons, Mr. Balfour's pious aspiration for the prorogation of August 17 is doomed to grievous disappointment.[1]

[1] The Bill was abandoned.

CHAPTER IX

CHILDE ARTHUR

A Raven in the House.—King Edward VII.—Grant to Lord Roberts.—Irishry and Irishman.—Why the Vote was Postponed.—Childe Arthur.—The Law Officers.—A Narrow Entry.—The Premier at Bay.—A Deserted Bench.—Sir Arthur Hayter.—Seale Haynes' Song.—Prorogation.

July 25. A Raven in the House.

An anonymous Irish member who lurks in the shadow of the gallery to the left of the Speaker adds a new joy to Parliamentary life. He is gifted with a voice the like of which was never heard on sea or land. Partially hidden behind a pillar at the top of the gangway steps there is something mysterious about his shadowy figure. He has never made a speech, his nearest approach to sustained articulation being the interjection of a supplementary Question. It is usually unintelligible; but the Speaker's instinct leads him to conclude that it is out of order, and he administers stern rebuke. When the voice sounds through the House, breaking its stillness or dominating its loudest uproar, one recalls the remark of the farmer's wife in one of Gay's fables:—

> That raven on the left-hand oak
> (Curse on his ill-betiding croak)
> Bodes me no good.

The voice is like the croak of a raven with a difference. The raven, seated on the bust of Pallas, has caught

cold in the draught of the open door and croaks rustily.

Apart from the mystery of the man lurking in the shadow, dodging behind the pillar, is the unexpectedness of the incursion of the voice. To-night, for example, Mr. Corbett asked whether it is intended to introduce in the Commons in the present Session the Bill dealing with the King's declaration on Accession? The crowded House sat attentive for the reply.

"An Anonymous Irish Member."

"Before the right hon. gentleman answers," said Mr. Johnstone of Ballykilbeg, rising to put another question. Thus far had he got when, with the suddenness of the thunderclaps that a few hours earlier broke over startled London, the voice was heard.

"Hear! hear! hear!" it croaked, with almost demoniac glee. What was the matter, and wherefore the ironical cheer no one knew. But the man's bubbling delight in his sole possession of the joke was so genuine that contagion spread, and in a moment some four hundred gentlemen of all ages and conditions of life were roaring with laughter, Johnstone of Ballykilbeg's grave countenance surveying the tumultuous scene with inquiring look.

July 26. King Edward VII. In the House of Lords the Prime Minister proclaimed the new style and title of King Edward VII. Its length is out of proportion to the audience that listened to the speech

or to the period of time the proceedings occupied. All was over in the space of ten minutes.

"Edward VII., by the grace of God of Great Britain and Ireland, and of all the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India."

July 31. Grant to Lord Roberts. The House of Commons presented a curious and instructive scene when gathered this afternoon to consider the King's Message recommending a vote of £100,000 for Lord Roberts. Mr. Balfour had evidently bestowed exceptional care on the preparation of his speech. Become by long and constant practice a debater of great readiness, he, in his characteristically casual manner, usually trusts to the inspiration of the moment. I have seen him on very special occasions when that most difficult of all House of Commons efforts, a ceremonial speech, was expected from him, jot down a few notes as he sat on the Treasury Bench waiting the signal to rise. To-day the exceptional volume of his notes testified to rare labour bestowed in preparation of the speech.

This necessity was probably due to the new departure he took in presenting himself to the amazed, amused House, as an arbiter in military tactics.

On the whole he was listened to with comparative decorum by the Nationalist members. They boisterously cheered when he paid a tribute to the bravery of the Boers, and broke forth in shouts of glee when he contemplated the consequences of a possible reverse on what proved to be Lord Roberts' triumphant march which led to the relief of Kimberley, Ladysmith, and Mafeking. Also they broke in with cries of dissent when, at the conclusion of his speech, he suggested that acknowledgment of Lord Roberts' great services to the country should be unanimous. That is, however, nothing compared with their regular habit when any

member, small or great, presumes to set forth opinions distasteful to them.

Irishry and a Great Irishman.

The incident which, with long and intimate knowledge of the House of Commons, struck one with freshness and force, was the attitude of the crowded assembly whilst Mr. Dillon declaimed his speech. It had gathered to do honour to a great soldier who, in an hour of extreme peril, snatched victory out of accumulated disaster. The panegyric bestowed upon him by the Leader of the House was echoed and enforced by the Leader of the Opposition. Apart from his service to the State, there is that about the personality of Lord Roberts that compels the admiration, captures the affection of men and women. In manner simple and straightforward as a child, he has also a child's gentleness of heart. The reproach laid against him by foreign military critics is that during the campaign in South Africa he was too merciful in his ways. Had he been animated by something of the innate cruelty of Napoleon, or the "thoroughness" of Von Moltke, the war would have been brought to a swifter conclusion.

That is what foreign critics not friendly to this country said. Mr. Dillon, safe in the security of the House of Commons, accused Lord Roberts of conducting the war with systematized inhumanity, of committing repeated and gross violations of recognized rules, of deceiving Parliament and the people, of manœuvring as a military politician, and of proving a dismal and hideous failure. Whilst Mr. Dillon, amid rapturous cheers from his party, thus defamed his illustrious countryman, the 281 members who presently voted for the grant maintained an attitude of courteous attention. Had the loud voice which filled the Chamber been that of a donkey braying in Palace Yard they

would certainly have shown more resentment. If we think what would have happened in analogous circumstances in the French Legislative Chamber, the German Reichsrath, or even the United States Legislature, we shall more fully appreciate the splendid self-restraint enforced by the traditions of the House of Commons.

Aug. 1. Why the Vote was Postponed. With reference to the money vote for Lord Roberts, I hear from one of Mr. Balfour's colleagues a characteristic story. The First Lord of the Treasury was anxious to submit the vote immediately Committee of Supply was set up in the early days of the session. Desirous to have it passed by acclaim, he felt that end was more likely to be attained if action were taken on the crest of the wave of enthusiasm following on Lord Roberts' return from South Africa. In this view the Cabinet concurred, but opposition came from an unexpected quarter. On communicating the intention to Lord Roberts, he modestly expressed the wish that action might be deferred. Still hoping for the early conclusion of the war, he would rather await that event before receiving his reward.

His honourable sensitiveness was respected, and submission of the vote put off till the closing days of the session. It will be recognized that this action is consonant with others publicly taken by Lord Roberts, who since his return has postponed acceptance of proffered banquets and swords of honour. There is a substantial difference in the case of deferring acceptance of the Parliamentary grant. Six months' interest on £100,000, even at 3 per cent., reaches a goodly sum.

Aug. 9. Childe Arthur. "I am a child in these matters," said Mr. Arthur Balfour, with a memorable burst of confidence that illumined a dull night in the session of the last Parliament. The occasional infantile

ingenuousness of the Leader of the House of Commons is one of several qualities that endear him to it. Never was it displayed in fuller force than to-night.

The military instincts of a Government trained in South Africa have, it appeared, led to an invasion of peaceful Carnarvonshire by a force of three hundred cavalry. This frontal attack was delivered in connexion with the long-sustained strike in the Penrhyn slate quarries. For eleven months this has been going forward with a restraint from passion on the part of the men to which the Home Secretary bore testimony. Of late, according to official report, matters have become a little strained. The six hundred men imported by Lord Penrhyn to take the place of the strikers have been threatened by the wives and little children of the men on strike, who appear to have found work farther south. The magistrates at Bangor, the local authority most closely concerned in the matter, do not share the apprehension that fills the martial bosom of the chief constable of the county. They, at any rate, did not exercise the power vested in them of appealing for military assistance. Failing that, an occult body, the sub-committee of the joint committee of magistrates and the County Council communicated with the Home Office, and the cavalry were dispatched at the gallop.

This is the story collated from the singularly confused debate which followed on the motion for the adjournment moved by Mr. William Jones with the object of discussing the matter as one of urgent public importance.

Whilst the debate went on, Mr. Arthur Balfour was diligently schooling himself at the founts of legal lore poured forth by the Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General, Sir E. Carson, Dark Rosaleen of the Treasury Bench looking gloomily on. The matter was not one calling for the personal intervention of the Leader of the House. If the Home Secretary wanted assistance

the Law Officers of the Crown were there to give it. But the thing had a curious fascination for Mr. Balfour, and when that eminent Welsh member, Sir William Harcourt, delivered judgment he gaily stepped to the table.

Any stray corners in his mind unfurnished by the Attorney-General on points of law were crammed with information by the Home Secretary about details of the situation at Bethesda. Like a practised debater, he began with these. He read from a report of the fighting chief constable how at a meeting of quarrymen on strike threats had been uttered against the men at work. That, he argued, was of itself sufficient justification for the dispatch of the cavalry. Mr. William Allan hotly jumping up from below the gallery opposite pointed out a fatal flaw in the argument. This meeting had taken place on Tuesday night, and on Tuesday morning the cavalry were already on the march.

"Hotly jumping up!"

"Ah," said Mr. Balfour, airily waving the paper, "I am merely paraphrasing, you know. Saves time." But he dropped the sheet and took up another.

A Narrow Entry.

This was much more promising. It described how a quarryman coming home from work had been followed by a mob of women, a crowd

of bloodthirsty children, who expressed disapproval of the attitude assumed by him in connexion with the strike.

"There was a narrow entry," said Mr. Balfour, looking up from the manuscript and regarding the attentive House with features sternly set in expression of indignant horror.

Disposition to laugh, displayed a few moments earlier, was checked by his solemn words. The almost awful look on a usually smiling countenance made the flesh creep. Members knew what was coming. Trapped in this narrow entry, the hapless man had been torn limb from limb by the women, the gory fragments buried under the flags by the children. Looking again at the manuscript, Mr. Balfour hesitated. Members felt that, naturally, he shrank from recital of the crime. "Ah, yes, I see," he added in his most casual tone, and was turning over a fresh leaf. The House, hungry for horror, insisted on knowing what part the narrow entry played in the tragedy, and Mr. Balfour, rapidly reading on, told how the man turned down it and got safely home.

This was a little disappointing. Wait till he subjugated a scoffing House by display of his legal lore acquired during the last half hour. Earlier speeches left some doubt on the important question. What agency moved the Home Secretary to move the War Office to move the cavalry on Bethesda? According to the law as laid down by Mr. Haldane and his learned brother, Sir William Harcourt, such action could be taken only at the instance of the local magistrates. The local (Bangor) magistrates publicly disavowed action in the matter.

The Premier at Bay.

Mr. Balfour explained that it was the sub-committee of the joint committee of the magistrates and County Council of Carnarvon-

shire who had communicated with the Home Office. That was admirable ; but when he proceeded to enlarge and enforce the argument, the way the sub-committee got mixed up with the joint committee, the County Council with the magistrates, and the Home Office with them all, was appalling. Interruptions and corrections rained upon him till his seraphic temper took unto itself wings, leaving him flushed with anger, meeting contradiction with snapping rejoinder.

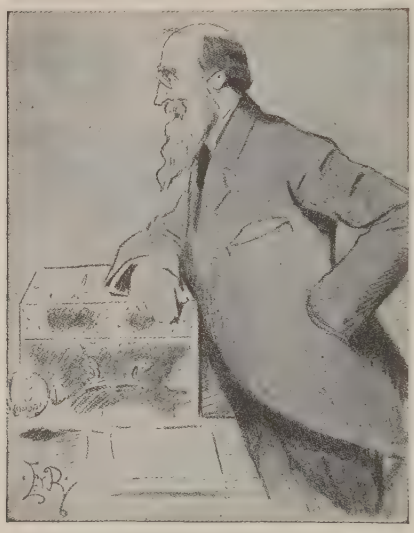
Presently a happy thought struck him. It was the Attorney-General who had got him into this mess. Why not throw the Attorney-General to the wolves ? "If any lawyer from the other side," he said, "who disputes my reading of the case will get up and say so my hon. and learned friend the Attorney-General will be happy to deal with him."

The burst of laughter this sally caused brought the smile back to Childe Arthur's cheeks, and he went on to the end in his ordinary pleasant manner. But he made the journey as short as possible.

Aug. 9. A Deserted Bench.

Not since the famous meeting at the Reform Club, indeed not before it, has there been such unanimity of attitude as was observed by the leaders of the Opposition to-night in prospect of the performance of their followers in the way of an all night sitting. All were gone, the old familiar faces—Sir Henry Fowler, Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, even Mr. Bryce. Only four gentlemen who, having held ministerial office, have seats on the Front Opposition Bench availed themselves of the privilege of occupying them. One, Mr. Burt, left early, after one of his rare brief speeches, which, modestly delivered, command the attention of the House. That Sir Walter Foster should have sacrificed personal comfort to political peregrination was doubtless due rather to humanitarian impulses than

to party tactics. Now that Dr. Tanner is no more, and since Dr. Farquharson has anticipated the date of prorogation, there was no qualified medical man on the premises. It was a sultry night. The pace kept up was severe, and the peculiar humour of the thing was provocative of desire to seek other worlds.



Modest Mr. Burt.

So Sir Walter Foster, Bart., F.R.C.P. Lond., M.D. of University of Erlangen, sat on the bench, with suspicion of a box of surgical instruments bulging in his breast coat pocket, and a faint odour of restoratives suffusing the neighbourhood as his coat tails flapped on his march to and from the division lobbies.

Sir Arthur Hayter.

He shared the bench with those two old Parliamentary war horses, Sir Arthur Hayter and Mr. Seale Hayne. But for occasional accident at the poll Sir Arthur would now be in the running for the Fathership of the House. He has much time to make up owing to absence from the House consequent on the fickleness of the constituencies. To-night presented a favourable opportunity. It was just as well to show sybaritic young things like Henry Asquith and Edward Grey what a veteran who was in the House with Palmerston could do in the

way of sitting up. With effeminate times, when members grumble if they aren't in bed by midnight, the former Member for Bath, who acted as Whip through the greater part of the unparalleled times between 1873 and 1885, has no sympathy. His presence on the Front Bench to-night, in addition to the coolness and freshness of his dinner dress, was a pointed and, it is to be hoped, a useful rebuke to modern squeamishness about Parliamentary late hours.

Seale Hayne's Song.

Mr. Seale Hayne in point of time ranks twenty years behind Sir Arthur Hayter on the Parliamentary roll. If possible, he looks quite as much a statesman. His memory will live long in the hearts of survivors of Mr. Gladstone's Administration of 1892–5. The Paymaster-General's reputation as a singer preceded him to the Ministerial whitebait dinner held at the end of the first session of the Ministry that carried a Home Rule Bill through the Commons. It was whispered that he was a member of the Royal Choir, Albert Hall, and there was some question whether he might not elevate the occasion by appearing in his surplice and chanting grace before and after meat. That was absurd. But when the salmon had gone round several times, and hearts were light some one (not the Premier) started the jocund song. Presently there were cries for Seale Hayne, and the Paymaster-General, much entreated, yielded to the flattering solicitation.

The piece selected for the occasion created some comment among his colleagues. It was the well-known dirge, "Down Among the Dead Men!" Had this been sung in July, 1895, a week after the cordite explosion in the House of Commons, its appropriateness would have been recognized. To begin with, uplifted at the first holiday dinner of the new Ministry, it seemed a little ominous.

It was, however, recognized that no personal application was intended. The fact is Mr. Seale Hayne is gifted with a fine baritone voice, capable of *tours de force* in the lower notes. As Lord Rosebery observed, in expressing on behalf of the distinguished company the pleasure with which they had listened to the song, "When you get down among the dead men you naturally reach the lower C."

Aug. 17. Prorogation. The session now breathing its last will not be counted amongst the most useful or the most honoured of a long line. But it certainly has achieved one important mission. It has demonstrated the impossibility of carrying on business in the House of Commons under the existing rules. Their breakdown has been so complete that twice, at the beginning and at the end, Mr. Balfour was obliged to do a little tinkering. The strengthening of the rule governing the suspension of disorderly members, and the closuring of Supply by compartments, served their immediate purposes. They cannot be regarded as other than temporary expedients.

During the last fortnight the House has presented a pitiable condition. In a portion of two nights nearly fifty millions sterling were voted in Supply without opportunity for discussion. An exceptionally large measure of time had been given to Supply, and it was wilfully wasted. The votes had to be rushed, and they were passed by a process of physical exercise in the precincts of the House.

This week has seen measures of immense detail and highest importance driven through in the dead of the night, or by a Wednesday sitting extending from noon till midnight. It is impossible that legislation accomplished in such circumstances can be flawless, whilst the dignity and ancient renown of the House of Commons are fatally undermined.

JANUARY.

23. *Wed.*—House met on the occasion of the demise of her late Majesty Queen Victoria, pursuant to the Act of 6 Anne, c. 7.
The Speaker and Members take the Oath or Affirmation to his Majesty King Edward VII.
24. *Thur.*—Members take the Oath or Affirmation.
25. *Fri.*—Members take the Oath or Affirmation.
Message from the King respecting the Death of her late Majesty. Address in reply thereupon. Resolved *nemine contradicente*.
House adjourned until Thursday, February 14.

FEBRUARY.

14. *Thur.*—Parliament opened by the King in person.
H. M. Speech. Address. Debate adjourned.
15. *Fri.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Debate adjourned.
18. *Mon.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Debate adjourned.
Questions to Ministers. Motion, *Mr. Dillon*. Division—For, 204; Against, 249.
19. *Tues.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Licensing Laws, *Mr. Whitaker*. Debate adjourned.
20. *Wed.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Licensing Laws. Division—For, 146. Against, 272.
21. *Thur.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Irish Land Acts, *Mr. John Redmond*. Division—For, 140. Against, 235.
22. *Fri.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, United Irish League, *Mr. W. O'Brien*. Division—For, 109. Against, 203.
25. *Mon.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Indian Expenditure, *Mr. Caine*. Division—For, 112. Against, 204.
26. *Tues.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Conduct of the War in South Africa, *Mr. Dillon*. Division—For, 91. Against, 243.
Main Question. Division—For, 297. Against, 78. Address agreed to.
27. *Wed.*—Business of the House. Supply. Motion, *Mr. Balfour*. Division—For, 257. Against, 104.
Mines (Eight Hours) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 212. Against, 199.
28. *Thur.*—Supply: Civil Service (Supplementary) Estimates, 1900–1901.

MARCH.

1. *Fri.*—Supply: Civil Service (Supplementary) Estimates, 1900–1901.
4. *Mon.*—Business of the House (Financial Business). Motion, *Mr. Balfour.* Division—For, 237. Against, 144.
5. *Tues.*—Supply: Civil Services and Revenue Departments Estimates, 1901–1902 (Vote on Account). FIRST allotted day.
6. *Wed.*—Compensation for Damage to Crops, etc., Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 307. Against, 80.
7. *Thur.*—Standing Order No. 21. Motion, *Mr. Balfour.* Division on Main Question, as amended—For, 264. Against, 51.
8. *Fri.*—Supply: Army (Supplementary) Estimates, 1900–1901. Statement by *Mr. Brodrick.*
11. *Mon.*—Civil List. Motion for Select Committee, *Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*
Business of the House (Reports of Money Committees). Motion, *Mr. Balfour.* Division on Main Question—For, 190. Against, 103.
Supply: (Army Estimates). Amendment, *Mr. C. Douglas.* Debate adjourned.
12. *Tues.*—Supply: (Army Estimates). Debate on Amendment resumed. Division—For, 262. Against, 148.
13. *Wed.*—Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 163. Against, 250.
14. *Thur.*—Supply: Civil Services (Supplementary) Estimates, 1900–1901.
15. *Fri.*—Supply: (Army Estimates). Adjourned Debate.
18. *Mon.*—Supply: (Navy Estimates), 1901–1902.
Supply: Civil Services and Revenue Departments Revised Supplementary Estimate, 1900–1901.
19. *Tues.*—Supply: Civil Services and Revenue Departments Revised Supplementary Estimate, 1900–1901.
20. *Wed.*—Sale of Intoxicating Liquor to Children Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 372. Against, 54.
21. *Thur.* 22, 23.—Supply: (Navy Estimates), 1901–1902.
25. *Mon.*—Supply: (Navy Estimates), 1901–1902. SECOND allotted day.
Supply: Civil Services, 1900–1901.
Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. First Reading.

26. *Tues.*—Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. Second Reading.
27. *Wed.*—Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. Committee. Beer Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 245. Against, 133.
28. *Thur.*—Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. Third Reading.
29. *Fri.*—Supply: THIRD allotted day. Navy Estimates, 1901–2. Army Estimates, 1901–2.

APRIL.

1. *Mon.*—Demise of the Crown Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 155. Against, 72.
2. *Tues.*—Adjournment of the House (Easter). Motion, *Mr. Balfour*. Division—For, 185. Against, 56. House adjourned for Easter Recess.
18. *Thur.*—Ways and Means. Financial Statement, *Sir M. Hicks-Beach*.
19. *Fri.*—Sittings of the House. Motion, *Mr. Balfour*. Division—For, 192. Against, 145.
Ways and Means. Motion, *Sir M. Hicks-Beach*. Division—For, 186. Against, 117. Resolution agreed to.
22. *Mon.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates. Committee. Amendment, Roman Catholic University in Ireland, *Mr. Roche*, Negatived. Main Question put. Division—For, 239. Against, 138.
Army Annual Bill in Committee.
23. *Tues.*—Ways and Means. Income Tax. Motion, *Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*. Division—For, 363. Against, 88.
24. *Wed.*—Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 279. Against, 122.
25. *Thur.*—Ways and Means. Committee.
26. *Fri.*—Supply: FOURTH allotted day. Civil Service, etc., Estimates, 1901–1902.
29. *Mon.*—Ways and Means. Committee.
30. *Tues.*—London and North Western Railway Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 195. Against, 289.

MAY.

1. *Wed.*—Education (Young Children School Attendance) (Scotland) Bill. Second Reading.
2. *Thur.*—Ways and Means. Committee.
3. *Fri.*—Supply: FIFTH allotted day.
6. *Mon.*—Ways and Means. Committee.
Finance Bill. First Reading.
7. *Tues.*—Education Bill. First Reading.
8. *Wed.*—Land Tenure Bill. Second Reading. Amendment, *Mr. Griffith Boscawen.* Division—For, 164. Against, 225. Debate adjourned.
9. *Thur.*—Civil List considered in Committee.
Demise of the Crown Bill. Committee.
10. *Fri.*—Supply: SIXTH allotted day.
13. *Mon.*—Army Organization. Motion, *Mr. Brodrick.* Debate adjourned.
Civil List Bill. First Reading.
14. *Tues.*—Army Organization. Motion, *Mr. Brodrick.* Adjourned Debate.
15. *Wed.*—Legal Procedure (Ireland) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 102. Against, 226.
16. *Thur.*—Army Organization. Motion, *Mr. Brodrick.* Adjourned Debate. Division—For, 305. Against, 163.
17. *Fri.*—Supply: SEVENTH allotted day.
20. *Mon.* and 21.—Finance Bill. Second Reading. Amendment, *Sir Henry Fowler.* Division—For, 300. Against, 123. Debate adjourned.
22. *Wed.*—Labourers (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 137. Against, 223.
23. *Thur.*—Adjournment of the House (Whitsuntide). Motion, *Mr. Balfour.* Division—For, 191. Against, 121.
Finance Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 236. Against, 132.
24. *Fri.*—Civil List Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 149. Against, 38.
Demise of the Crown Bill. Committee.
Adjournment for Whitsuntide Recess.

JUNE.

6. *Thur.* and 7.—Supply.
10. *Mon.*—Civil List Bill. Committee.
Demise of the Crown Bill. Third Reading. Division—For, 199. Against, 109.

11. *Tues.*—Business of the House (Government Business). Motion, *Mr. Balfour*, Division—For, 144. Against, 111.
12. *Wed.*—Mines (Eight Hours) Bill. Committee.
13. *Thur.* and 14.—Supply.
17. *Mon.*—Adjournment of the House. Motion (Camps of Detention), *Mr. Lloyd-George*. Division—For, 134. Against, 253.
18. *Tues.*—Civil List Bill. Adjourned Debate on Third Reading. Division—For, 370. Against, 60.
Finance Bill. Committee.
19. *Wed.*—Education (Scotland) Bill (*changed title*). Third Reading.
20. *Thur.*—Finance Bill. Committee.
21. *Fri.*—Supply: TWELFTH allotted day.
24. *Mon.* and 25.—Finance Bill. Committee.
26. *Wed.*—Consolidated Fund (No. 2) Bill. First Reading.
27. *Thur.*—Consolidated Fund (No. 2) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 323. Against, 67.
Finance Bill. Committee.
28. *Fri.*—Supply: THIRTEENTH allotted day.
Consolidated Fund (No. 2) Bill. Committee. Bill Reported.

JULY.

1. *Mon.*—Militia and Yeomanry Bill. First Reading.
Consolidated Fund (No. 2) Bill. Third Reading.
Finance Bill. Committee.
2. *Tues.*—Finance Bill. Committee. Bill Reported.
Education (No. 2) Bill. First Reading.
3. *Wed.*—Supply: Navy Estimates, 1901–2.
4. *Thur.*—Finance Bill. Re-committed and Reported.
Loan Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 267. Against, 87.
5. *Fri.*—Supply: FOURTEENTH allotted day.
8. *Mon.*—Education (No. 2) Bill. Second Reading.
10. *Wed.*—Finance Bill. Amended in Committee and, on Re-committal, Considered.
11. *Thur.*—Ditto. Bill Reported.
12. *Fri.*—Supply: FIFTEENTH allotted day.
15. *Mon.*—Education (No. 2) Bill. Committee.
16. *Tues.*—Supply: SIXTEENTH allotted day.

17. *Wed.*—Finance Bill. Third Reading. Division—For, 291. Against, 121.
18. *Thur.*—Financial Relations of Great Britain and Ireland. Motion, *Mr. Clancy*. Division—For, 102. Against, 224.
19. *Fri.*—Supply: SEVENTEENTH allotted day.
22. *Mon.*—Business of the House (Government Business). Motion, *Mr. Balfour*. Division—For, 249. Against, 172.
23. *Tues.* and 24.—Education (No. 2) Bill. Committee. Bill Reported.
25. *Thur.* and 26.—Supply.
29. *Mon.*—Agricultural Rates Act, 1896, etc., Continuance Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 247. Against, 129.
30. *Tues.*—Education (No. 2) Bill. Third Reading. Division—For, 200. Against, 142.
31. *Wed.*—Supply. Committee. Motion, Grant to Earl Roberts, *Mr. Balfour*. Division—For, 281. Against, 73.

AUGUST.

1. *Thur.*—Loan Bill. Committee. Bill Reported.
Agricultural Rates Act, 1896, etc., Continuance Bill. Committee. Bill Reported.
2. *Fri.*—Supply: TWENTIETH allotted day.
Naval Works Bill. First Reading.
Military Works Bill. First Reading.
5. *Mon.*—Supply: TWENTY-FIRST allotted day.
Loan Bill. Third Reading.
6. *Tues.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates, 1901–2.
7. *Wed.*—Business of the House (Supply). Motion, *Mr. Balfour*. Division—For, 205. Against, 113.
Agricultural Rates Act 1896, etc., Continuance Bill. Third Reading. Division: For, 190. Against, 97.
8. *Thur.* and 9.—Supply.
12. *Mon.* and 13.—Factory and Workshop Acts Amendment and Consolidation Bill, as Amended (by the Standing Committee), Read Third time and Passed.

14. *Wed.*—Naval Works Bill. } Second Reading.
Military Works Bill. }
Sale of Intoxicating Liquors to Children Bill. Third Reading.

15. *Thur.*—Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Second Reading.
Naval Works Bill. } Committee.
Military Works Bill. }

16. *Fri.*—Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Committee.
Naval Works Bill. } Third Reading.
Military Works Bill. }

17. *Sat.*—Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Third Reading.
Prorogation.

SESSION 1902

CHAPTER X

THE IRISH CHIEF SECRETARY

The Opposition.—Irish Landlords and Mr. Wyndham.—The Home Ruler at Work.—Incursion of Mr. Quin.—The Chief Secretary temporises.—Oom Paul, M.P.—Invincible Blunderers.—Remounts.—The Gentleman who plays the Triangle.—The Free Fight of 1893.—Lord Dufferin.—Lord Ava.—Lord Rosebery and Japan.—A Veteran Liberal.—Earl Spencer.

Jan. 16. The Opposition. THE general impression among Liberal members thronging the Lobby of the House of Commons this afternoon, awaiting the Speaker's taking the chair and the opening of the business of the session, is that the party more nearly approaches a condition of internal peace than it has reached since the historic outbreak of war to the knife and fork. This, at least, is what members say to each other, and what they earnestly endeavour to believe. All sections agree that there is, after all, very little difference in the positions severally assumed by Lord Rosebery and Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman. Those who support C.-B. are so positive in this conviction that they do not see any reason why Lord Rosebery should not co-operate with the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons, leaving to him the pre-eminence of his titular position. The Roseberyites, also fully convinced, think that after C.-B.'s last speech there is no reason in the world why he should not serve under the ex-Liberal Premier.

This point of difference, the insignificance of which

is asserted on both sides, will prove fatal to effort to close up the breach. Lightly touched upon, assumed on either hand as a matter of course, it really is the crux of the whole business. Whilst noting and recording the almost pathetic endeavour to make believe in a condition of peace and unity, I am sorry to say I do not think that blessed state is more nearly at hand to-day than it was before Lord Rosebery delivered his Chesterfield speech or C.-B. patted him on the back at St. James's Hall.

There is a highly respectable section of the party who would be content to serve under either leader if only they would settle between themselves who is to walk first. But in either camp there is also a group of busy, resolute men who will have their own man and no other. These are they who sway the course of events, and though they, too, cry "Peace, peace," it is only upon consideration of their man being installed as chief, their dearly beloved brothers' favourite captain consenting to serve in subaltern position.

Jan. 17. Irish Landlords and Mr. Wyndham. Mr. Macartney, sometime Parlimentary Secretary to the Admiralty, left out on the formation of Lord Salisbury's Fourth Administration, to-night seized the opportunity to trounce a Chief Secretary (Mr. Wyndham) who, pursuing the policy of killing Home Rule with kindness, has chiefly succeeded in maiming the loyal landlords. When he rose the Nationalists opposite, recognizing a landlord, began after the fashion of the priests of ancient Baal to cut themselves with knives, to gnash their teeth and howl. Presently discovering that Mr. Macartney's mission was to "go for" the descendant of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, they quieted down, even cheered the intruder.

One charge of criminal clemency brought against the Chief Secretary related to the proceedings at an

ordinary meeting of a Board of Guardians in the neighbourhood of Tyrone. Mr. Macartney told his tale with the straightforwardness of Defoe, the literary simplicity of Sterne. As throwing light on life in Ireland there is nothing approaching it in *Handy Andy* or *Harry Lorrequer*. It appears that a Mr. Quin is in the habit of attending the weekly meetings of the Board of Guardians in order to report their proceedings for the waiting world. All on a day, one of the guardians giving voice to sentiments Mr. Quin could not approve, that gentleman spat in his face.

The Home Ruler at Work.

This commentary being remarked upon by others, Mr. Quin, intermitting his journalistic work, went round with a ruler which he severely administered to four of the Guardians. So irresistible was his passage round the Board that he would in a very few minutes have swept it clean and been able to sit down quietly and report the proceedings for his journal. Unfortunately for Mr. Quin, unhappily as it turned out for Mr. George Wyndham, the dispensing doctor happened to come across his path. Had Mr. Quin skirted him and gone on with the Guardians all would have been well. But, as history testifies, on many occasions a turn to the right or left at what seems an unimportant crisis is full of fate. If Napoleon had not invaded Spain he might have died in the Tuilleries, the King of Rome succeeding him on the Imperial throne. He launched his armies on Madrid, a step that proved the beginning of the end. So Mr. Quin closed with the dispensing doctor. He was overcome. The craven Guardians, lately looking for hats and cloaks, flung themselves on his prostrate body. He was carried forth, and the business of the sitting resumed.

So far events appear to have been in accordance with ordinary usage at meetings of Boards of Guardians in

country districts of Ireland. What followed was responsible for a considerable portion of a sitting in the House of Commons in a session of urgency being appropriated for discussion of the affair. Appeal being made to the police magistrate, Mr. Quin was bound over to keep the peace for twelve months towards his Majesty's subjects in general, the Guardians of the Poor in particular. From this appalling prospect Mr. Quin literally shrank. He declined to enter into recognisances, and with the assistance of a sympathetic population, evaded the police.

Incursion of Mr. Quin.

But the desire of a moth for the star found analogy burning in Mr. Quin's bosom. He could not keep away from the room of the Board of Guardians. On the day of their weekly meeting he privily entered, and when the Guardians were seated, lo ! there was Mr. Quin, pencil in hand, a benevolent smile on his face, ready to record their remarks for posterity.

The ruler having been judiciously removed beyond reach of the reporters' table, and a general spirit of amity prevailing, all would have gone well but for the meddlesome police. Getting wind of Mr. Quin's presence, they surrounded the Board Room as if the Guardians were a Boer commando. One entering commanded Mr. Quin in the King's name to surrender. He was induced to retire, deferring operations till the business before the Board of Guardians was disposed of. On communicating this result to his comrades, a policeman bold protested against this pandering with treason. He would hale Mr. Quin forth single-handed if he perished in the attempt. Accordingly, after a delightful shindy, Mr. Quin was taken into custody, and amid the wails and whoops of the outraged population, lodged in gaol.

Now comes the strange part of Mr. Macartney's

thrilling story. To the plain Saxon mind it seems reasonable to suppose that the Board of Guardians whose ordered deliberations Mr. Quin had interrupted, four of whom had suffered discipline at his hands through the instrumentality of the ruler, would applaud the action of the police in delivering them from the extra-professional attentions of the reporter. On the contrary, Mr. Quin having been dragged out by the police, just as if he were Mr. Flavin in the House of Commons, and opportunity presenting itself of resuming business, the Board of Guardians resolved to address to the Chief Secretary a protest against the outrage accomplished in their presence by the invading police.

The Chief Secretary Temporises.

It is presumable that the Guardian who received Mr. Quin's earliest attention, and the four others on whose heads he steadily brought down the parish ruler, dissented. On this point History and Mr. Macartney are silent. However that be, Mr. Wyndham, writing in reply to the remonstrance of the Guardians, whilst disavowing any sympathy with Mr. Quin's energetic proceedings, regretted that his arrest had not been deferred till the close of the meeting.

In voice broken with emotion Mr. Macartney dwelt on the consequences following this disastrous act of weakness by the Irish Office. The Land League is jubilant. Unionism lies low in the dust, smitten, not with Mr. Quin's ruler, but by the hand of a trusted Minister, representative of a powerful Government for which Ulster had made many sacrifices.

As for Mr. Quin he is the hero of the hour, the idol of the community. We shall certainly have him in Parliament on the next vacancy in an Irish constituency. Home Rule we have long had with us. Mr. Quin, as four of the Board of Guardians know to their cost, is the model of an active and sinewy Home Ruler.

Jan. 3. Oom Paul, M.P.

The Vice-President of the Irish Board of Agriculture, Sir Horace Plunkett, tells me a curious story about the Galway election, at which he stood and was defeated by Colonel Lynch. The earliest intention of the Nationalist party was to put up Mr. Kruger and run him as their candidate. The matter was seriously discussed. Objection taken that Mr. Kruger, being a foreigner and not naturalized, was incapable of sitting in the House of Commons was met by the ingenious argument that the Transvaal having been formally annexed, the ex-President forthwith became a British subject.

There is no doubt that if Colonel Lynch had not turned up with the recommendation that, having borne arms against the Queen, he would be equally objectionable to the Saxon, the fantastic project would have been carried out, and Mr. Kruger would have been triumphantly returned at the top of the poll.

Feb. 8. Invincible Blunderers.

In the House of Commons this week his Majesty's Government have received convincing proof of the impregnability of their position. Ten days ago they were attacked, the charge being led from their own side, in the matter of their settlement with the Telephone Company. It was shown that the Post Office and the Treasury had been as clay in the hands of that skilful potter, Mr. James Staats Forbes, and had made a bargain by which the company he acted for had the public at their mercy. It was recognized at the time that had it been a Liberal Government who were thus hoodwinked they would have been left in a minority by their own followers. The Unionists, better disciplined and ruled by other instincts, having made angry protest, went into the division lobby in support of their leaders, the Lord Mayor showing the way.

Remounts.

That was bad enough. Infinitely worse are disclosures made in connexion with the Hungarian horse deal. Nothing like this has happened, or, at least, has been disclosed, since the Crimean War. Since Moses Primrose went to market there has been nothing so unsophisticated as the action of the Committee appointed by the War Office to purchase horses for the Imperial Yeomanry. The similitude is made closer by the fact that young Primrose's famous deal was also over a horse. Sent to the fair to sell the vicar's steed, he bartered it for a gross of green spectacles with copper rims and shagreen cases.

It was the other way about with the War Office Committee. They bought horses instead of selling them. But the gross of green spectacles remains fairly representative of what they got for their money —or, to be precise, for the money of the hapless British taxpayer. A trifle under £35 they paid for a lot of rubbish on four legs picked up in Hungary at the rate of from £10 to £15 a horse.

It is a long time since the House of Commons was so angered as it showed itself over this affair. Mr. Gibson Bowles spoke the obvious truth when he said if the vote before the House were not on account of Supply for the army in the field the Government would have been defeated in the division lobby. As it was, Mr. Balfour found it necessary personally to interpose and promise full inquiry, conducted "without fear or favour."

At this straw loyal Ministerialists gladly clutched, and once more the Government were saved. But the process occurring twice in a fortnight beats the record. There is uneasy apprehension that the enormity accidentally come to light in respect of the Hungarian contract has in degree tainted other transactions entered into by the War Office in the matter of remounts. The bleeding of the taxpayer, estimated in such cir-

cumstances to amount to eight million sterling, is bad enough. The unforgivable iniquity lies in supplying these wretched screws to the hapless army. It explains much of the success of the slim Boer mounted on his well-seasoned horse.

"The Gentleman who Plays the Triangle."

Feb. 10. The Gentleman Who Plays the Triangle. Mr. T. P. O'Connor, speaking at eleven o'clock in a crowded House, greatly delighted it by a fling at the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board. In moving the

first motion relating to the new Rules of Procedure standing in the name of the First Lord of the Treasury, Mr. Grant Lawson spoke of that right hon. gentleman's "great speech."

Mr. O'Connor, referring to this, said, "I don't mind the audience applauding the leader of the orchestra, but the gentleman who plays the triangle might leave it to them."

Feb. 11. The Free Fight of 1893.

To-night a dramatic scene was suddenly sprung on a crowded House of Commons. Of course, Mr. Chamberlain figured prominently in it. Mr. Lloyd-George accused the Colonial Secretary of having led the riot which broke forth when, in 1893, the committee stage of Gladstone's Home Rule Bill was closured, refusing to obey the order from the Chair to clear the House for a division.

Mr. Chamberlain, by quotation from *Hansard*, was able to show that he had actually left the House before disorder broke out, and was not even a witness of the scene that followed.

Shortly after the outbreak Mr. Arthur Balfour gave me a graphic account of his personal knowledge of what happened. When at ten o'clock the guillotine descended and the Chairman of Committees rose amid deafening shouts to put the question, Mr. Balfour strolled forth into the division lobby, where he found himself in company with Mr. Chamberlain. Only a few members were in the lobby. Hearing prolonged uproar, they went back to the door giving entrance to the House, and tried to return. But the door was locked, and the attendant had no authority to open it until the division was over. It was only after considerable interval that they managed to get back and receive hurried accounts of what had happened.

Lord Peel, then Speaker, also told me of his experience. He had laid down on his bed half-dressed, not expecting a summons to the House till midnight. His train-bearer hastily arrived shortly after ten o'clock with urgent summons to the House. What had happened he did not know beyond the fact that there was a "row going on." When the Speaker took the chair he was in absolute ignorance of what had passed, gaining a slightly confused account from the narrative presented by the perturbed Chairman of Committees.

Feb. 12. Lord Dufferin. The death of Lord Dufferin, which took place to-day, is further saddened by inevitable reflection on passages attendant on the closing years of his life. Had the end mercifully come five years ago not a cloud would have chequered the brilliancy of an unparalleled career. Within the last three years Lord Dufferin lost his son and heir, lost his fortune, and, hardest blow of all, had his fair name smirched by association with a discreditable financial enterprise.

Not a trace of personal dishonour attached to the late chairman of the London and Globe group of companies. But, as was testified by the pathetic letter written from his death-bed by Lord Dufferin promising to give evidence as soon as he could move, he keenly felt the degradation of the association.

Much happier was the fate of Lord Loch, his predecessor in the chair, who died two years before the crash came. The stooping of the great statesman and man of letters to become the figure-head of such a company was due to that eternal lack of pence that sometimes hampers public men. After serving the State through forty years in successive high positions, Lord Dufferin retired on a pension of £1,700 a year, some-

thing less than is given to the chairman of a railway company on resigning active service. The Sheridans never were famous for hoarding money. The glittering bribe of salary held out by Whitaker Wright proved irresistible. Lord Dufferin took it, and amongst other penalties paid was the shortening of a precious life.

Lord Ava. Early in the campaign in South Africa I received a letter from Ian Hamilton (not then knighted), in which he spoke enthusiastically of the services in the field of young Lord Ava. Unattached, but resolved to see some fighting, he besought Colonel Hamilton to take him on his staff as a galloper. Consent was given, but a little difficulty arose, inasmuch as Lord Ava had no horse and, thanks to the too-famous War Office arrangements for remounts, the Colonel had none to lend him.

Young Ava was not to be baulked as a galloper by reason of so trifling a circumstance. Throughout the battle of Elandslaagte he, rifle in hand, did his "galloping" on foot, carrying orders to and fro hour after hour through the sultry day. His last instruction was to convey to the Gordons signal to advance. He joined in the charge, coming out of the fire unsinged.

I wrote something about the incident, and being widely quoted the narrative came under the notice of Lord Dufferin. I have before me in his neat handwriting a letter in which he says: "The notice of Lord Ava has greatly gratified Lady Dufferin, myself, and all his friends. We have three sons in Africa—one, a lieutenant in the 9th Lancers, is with Methuen, and, as you know, Ava is shut up in Ladysmith, while a third has gone out, happily not to fight, but to write a book at the instance of a confiding and appreciative publisher. I only wish I could think that he would

refrain from poking his nose into danger; but that is a hopeless anticipation, for he will be sure to try to join one or other of his brothers."

Too soon after, Lord Ava died, gun in hand, repelling an assault of the Boers. And now Clandeboye is in mourning again for the most illustrious of the race of Sheridan.

Feb. 13. Lord Rosebery and Japan.

The waned popularity of Lord Salisbury's Government is warmed by a flicker of fire responsive to the news of the signing of the treaty with Japan. In reply to a question, Lord Cranborne to-night described its objects as threefold. It is designed to preserve the integrity of China; to establish the commercial policy of the "open door," and to maintain the arrangements of Japan with respect to Korea. The war obligation laid upon the signatories becomes operative only in case of aggressive attacks upon the ally.

The treaty is the seal of the policy with relation to Japan Lord Rosebery initiated at a critical period of unrest in the Far East. The attitude of Great Britain towards Japan when she had beaten down China, and certain Western Powers were disposed to withhold from her the fruits of victory was closely akin to that happily assumed by this country towards the United States in her war with Spain. In both cases it had the effect of creating warm and powerful friendship. Japan is England's natural ally in the Far East, a desirable colleague in carrying out a policy of peace and non-intervention.

The satisfaction with which the treaty is regarded in the United States indicates a possible practical extension of the alliance. In accordance with policy bequeathed from the time of President Monroe the Republic does not enter into alliances with foreign

Powers. But it is evident where the sympathies and, if necessary, the assistance of the United States would be in any attempted disruption of affairs in the Far East.

CHAPTER XI

THE CLEAN SLATE

The Writing on the Slate.—Joy in the Ministerial Camp.—A Twentieth Century Job.—Lord Rosebery.—Tidings of Great Joy for the Irish Members.—Mysterious Incursion.—Strangers in the House.—Reconstructing the Ministry.—Sir Richard Temple.

Feb. 21. The Writing on the Slate.

In a recent speech Lord Rosebery declared for the principle of the Liberal Party re-starting its career with "a clean slate," which means, *inter alia*, dropping Home Rule. C.-B. speaking at Leicester on Wednesday, significantly responded: "I am wholly opposed to the doctrine of the clean slate. I am not prepared to erase from the tablets of my creed any principle or measure or proposal or aspiration of Liberalism." Lord Rosebery in a letter published in *The Times* this morning declares "definite separation" from C.-B. This is the first writing on the cleaned slate.

Joy in the Ministerial Camp.

The controversy absorbs attention in the lobby, Ministerialists chuckling over fresh manifestation of the hopeless fissure in the ranks of the Liberal party. They recognize in it the charter of their continued lease of power. They are in office and will remain there, not because they are good and great, but because there is no one to take their place. With a well led, united Opposition their multitudinous ranks in the House of Commons would

be dissolved before Coronation Day. Unrest and discontent in the Ministerial camp appear in the speeches made in debate on procedure, the abstentions from the division lobby, the angry growling round the remount scandal, and the colossal waste of public money on the meat contract.

It is only in the confidence of private conversation that the full depth and extent of the discontent is disclosed. For practical purposes it will come to nothing. Good Conservatives growl at their leaders and follow them into the division lobby. All the same, if, instead of pommelling each other at private dinners and public meetings, the leaders of the Liberal party and their lieutenants marched together, the Government would find themselves in a tight corner.

A Twentieth Century Job. In Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's position in the House of Commons to-night there was something akin to the personal history of Job. Perfect and upright the meanest of his assailants admit him to be. Also a man of substance, with equivalent in the Funds to more than Job's seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, not to mention five hundred she-asses. Living contented and prosperous, there came a day when, yielding to impulses purely unselfish, based on a sense of duty, he accepted the call to the leadership of the Opposition in the House of Commons, thrown up in despair by Sir William Harcourt. Since then he has not had a happy hour. His treatment by the party that, at the Reform Club, claimed his acceptance of the leadership has been simply atrocious. With shrewd appreciation of the situation, Sir Henry, in accepting the honour thrust upon him, sought to exact a pledge.

"If," he said in acknowledging the unanimous resolution passed by a once more united party, "we

are to fulfil the legitimate functions of an active Opposition with anything like dignity and credit to ourselves, then there must be a willingness to subordinate individual ideas and opinions to what is believed to be for the general interest. Just let me quote an instance. With regard to such a matter as the daily conduct of public business there must be deference paid to the Leader's ideas of tactical necessity, without which it would be impossible for him successfully to maintain his position."

Before the session far advanced the new Leader of the Opposition found his authority flouted on a minor point of procedure. He speedily grew accustomed to finding himself in one lobby with the pleasing knowledge that a section of his so-called following were in the other.

That was before the outbreak of the war in South Africa made fresh and deeper fissure in the ranks of the party. It was on Monday, February 6, 1899, that, in the smoking-room of the Reform Club, Sir Henry was acclaimed Leader of the Liberal Opposition. Looking back, and recalling all that has happened since, there is something pathetic in the closing words of his speech :

"My whole heart goes out towards you. My warmest thanks are due to you for the signal and distinguished honour you have paid me. My best and freest services shall be cordially rendered to you."

To-night, being Friday, February 21, 1902, Sir Henry, aged by more than three years, sits on the Front Opposition Bench, brooding over the spectacle of the Liberal party, comparatively small to begin with, hopelessly broken in twain.

Feb. 22. Lord Rosebery. I hear of a remark made by the King on the political situation, the pawky humour of which is much in Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's

way. His Majesty was being conducted through one of the picture galleries, when he stopped before a portrait of his far-off predecessor, Henry VI. "The portrait," said his Majesty's companion, "is curiously like one of Lord Rosebery."

"Why?" asked the King, smiling. "Do you recognize in the countenance evidence of irresolution?"

The bearing of this observation lay in the application of it, as Captain Cuttle's friend, Jack Bunsby, used to say of his own cryptic remarks.

Lord Rosebery's letter declaring definite separation from the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons naturally seemed to be the prelude of a distinct and important line of action. Nothing has followed except the proclamation of the Liberal League, which C.-B. wittily compared with Mr. Brodrick's army corps. "The staff officers have been gazetted, but troops are not yet in sight." Even in respect of this demonstration Lord Rosebery's direct agency does not appear.

In the House of Lords the alleged characteristic slyly hinted at in the King's remark is curiously shown. On the night Lord Rosebery sent to *The Times* his letter finally cutting himself adrift from the official Opposition, he left his corner seat below the gangway and found one on the cross benches. When the House met again on the following Monday the ex-Premier was once more found on the cross benches. But he was evidently not at home there. Twice he left that quarter of the House and reseated himself in his old place.

This may have been accident. Students of his character who find in it a tendency to halt when he seems to be really marching somewhere, discover in this trivial incident proof of the accuracy of their judgment.

Feb. 24. Tidings of Great Joy for the Irish Members.

In the course of the last thirty years I have chanced to be present at the long succession of scenes that have varied the business hours of the House of Commons. I do not recall any that made so painful an impression as that created to-night when the Irish members broke in with shouts of jubilation on Mr. Brodrick's sad story of the capture of the wounded Methuen.

Their position in the House of Commons has been frankly defined by their leader. Mr. Redmond, a little more than a year ago, plainly told an unperturbed assembly that the Irish members are a foreign substance foisted upon it against their will and irreconcilable in their hostility. That is a fact to be regretted, but it can be faced. An open foe is better than a disguised enemy. But the most determined foes have their intervals of chivalry, their moments of magnanimity. When one has met with a reverse in the field the other, whether he be Briton or Boer, does not jeer at him, crowing over his reverse, mocking at his mourning for friends killed or wounded in the field. That is just what the Irish members did to-night.

What added to the pain of the situation was its unexpectedness. When, questions over, Mr. Brodrick appeared at the table, the House instinctively felt he had stirring news to communicate. Invariably news of an important engagement in South Africa, whether it has proved victorious or disastrous to British arms, has leaked out before being officially announced in the House of Commons. To-night, when Mr. Brodrick stood at the table, not a whisper of the purport of his message had circulated.

I confess there flashed across my mind expectation that the Secretary of State was about to communicate news pointing to the near approach of peace. Possibly the idea occurred to other lookers-on. That made only the more crushing the truth blurted out in Lord

Kitchener's opening sentence, trumpeting "Bad news about Methuen." At this note there was a movement of quickened interest among the Irish members, a sort of smacking of the lips in anticipation of a toothsome meal. When Mr. Brodrick, with difficulty mastering his emotion, went on to read how Lord Methuen, with his guns and his baggage, was captured, the Irish members, unable to control themselves, burst into hilarious cheering, Mr. Swift MacNeill, like the hills known to the Psalmist, clapping his hands for joy.

March 13. Mysterious Incursion.

During the temporary absence of the Speaker, gone in quest of his "chop," a curious incident took place in the almost empty chamber.

On the operatic stage, more especially when burlesque holds it, the audience is familiar with the scene where three, or five, men enter on tiptoe, look to the right and to the left, advance with extended step, suddenly halt, put their hand to their face with gesture of warning and attention, then break into concerted song. Omitting the song, something like this happened to-night.

Three men in morning dress entered from the glass doorway under the clock. Looking round and assuring themselves that the Sergeant-at-Arms and his sword had removed themselves from the chair, they cautiously advanced towards the table. One, debouching to the left, busied himself about the Treasury Bench, apparently planting out small phials upon its surface. Two or three of the reporters, lingering in their gallery over the Speaker's chair, furtively watched the suspicious proceeding. What did it portend? Were these members of Mr. T. W. Russell's "party" engaged by him to mine the Treasury Bench with intent to blow up the hirelings *en bloc!*

Further investigation was interrupted by discovery that another of the interlopers had fixed a sort of tripod, and was by its aid directing a cylindrical instrument point-blank at the Press Gallery. The occupants (being mostly married men) promptly withdrew, and record of subsequent procedure on the floor of the House abruptly stops.

Strangers in the House.

It turned out later that the incident, uncanny as it looked, was a mere prosaic matter of business. From its early history the House of Commons is, from time to time, familiar with incursions of more or less authoritative persons under orders to "take away" something or somebody. To begin with, there was Cromwell's visit to the Rump of the Long Parliament, and his stern command, "Take away that Bauble!" Twenty-one years ago there was the appearance on the scene of elderly messengers mustered by the late Captain Gosset, then Sergeant-at-Arms, who forcibly removed thirty-seven members. Only last session we had the police called in, and the ejection *vi et armis* of Mr. Flavin and one or two other Irish members.

These black-coated strangers, prowling about the floor of the House, with their glass phials, their tripods, and their air pump, were there merely in fulfilment of a mission to remove the bacilli that have, since the session opened, wrought havoc on our statesmen.

They bagged a fair number which are now under careful treatment. It would be idle to assume regret at their departure, or commiseration at their sudden cutting-off. They have brought their fate on themselves. Repeatedly since the session opened they have, on the eve of a division, heard the Speaker issue the order "Strangers will withdraw." They disobeyed the mandate, and have now been carried out, just as if they were Irish members.

Reconstructing the Ministry. It is curious how choice in their feeding these phenomena have shown themselves. Avoiding Irish members and right hon. gentlemen on the Front Opposition Bench, they have literally gone for his Majesty's Ministers. It is the flowers of the forest that are a' wede awa'. The First Lord of the Treasury, the Lord High Chancellor, the Secretary of State for Home Affairs, the President of the Local Government Board, the President of the Board of Agriculture, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, the Vice-President of the Board of Education, the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, the Parliamentary Secretary to the War Office, the Solicitor-General, the Chairman of Ways and Means—these have at one time or another since the session opened been attacked and have succumbed.

There has long been fitful talk of reconstructing the Ministry. Nothing has come of it from the ordinary centre of action in such matters. It seems as if the bacilli, noting the hesitation, have resolved to take the matter in hand.

Sir Richard Temple. Announcement of the death of Sir Richard Temple surprised many people with the information that a week ago he was still alive. Since his retirement from the House of Commons he withdrew altogether from public life. Up to the present season he, however, maintained his touch with its social functions. He was frequently met at the evening parties of political dames, and was one of a narrow circle that enjoyed the advantage of receiving invitations from both political camps. He dearly loved a chat about the House of Commons, towards which, like Goldsmith's Traveller and his home, "his heart, untravelled, fondly turned."

He did not disguise the bitter disappointment of

his Parliamentary career. He told me in one of many quiet conversations aside from the bustle of a brilliant throng, that when he set out for India, a youth seeking his fortune, the House of Commons was his goal. He rose to high position in India, and had chance of further promotion. Opportunity suddenly presenting itself of finding a seat, he threw up everything and hurried home to fight Evesham at the general election of 1885. Accustomed to carry everything before him in India, he was not prepared for the chilling reception he met with in the House of Commons. Doggedly holding on, it in the end struck him to the marrow, and he retired from the contest a shattered man.

CHAPTER XII

WAR OFFICE CONTRACTS

Ministerial Triumph.—A Scene.—Overworked Senators. —Mr. Chaplin in the Shade.—John Brown's Statue Marched off.—A Message from Home.

March 18. Ministerial Triumph.

THE net result of two nights' debate on the Vote of Censure specially directed against the war contracts was to run the ministerial cumbrously large majority up by another twenty-five. C.-B.'s amendment was negatived by 346 votes against 191. This is very hard on the Leader of the Opposition, already harassed by many woes. It is his constitutional business to oppose. If he does not from time to time attack the Ministry he is accused of supineness. If he does deliver elaborately planned attack, the inevitable result is to do the Ministry the great service of closing up their ranks by bringing waverers into line.

If ever there was a chance of a numerically small Opposition dealing a damaging blow at a powerful Ministry, it seemed to present itself in connexion with the War Office contracts. Through two nights' debate to which Mr. John Burns, inflated with indignation, contributed an effective indictment of the Government, no one rose on the Ministerial side save from the Treasury Bench to defend the War Office from the charge of incapacity written large on the horse and meat contracts. If considerations of loyalty to the

Government could have been set aside, and members left free to vote on an abstract question, condemnation of the transactions would have been universal. With shrewd sense of the situation, Mr. Balfour promptly recognized Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's resolution as a vote of censure. In his speech on winding up the debate he emphasized this point, plainly declaring that if the motion were carried the Government would go out.

"Inflated with Indignation."

That sufficed. The Ministerialists to a man went into the "No" lobby, and what was designed as a vote of censure became a triumphant vote of confidence.

Lord Salisbury's Government is in an impregnable position, not because it is the best of all Governments (I should like to see Mr. Chamberlain turned loose upon it from his old quarters on the other side of the table), but because it is faced by an impossible Opposition.

March 20. A Scene. On the third reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill there burst forth one of those storms which occasionally ruffle the ordinarily placid surface. C.-B. having seized an opportunity to make a vigorous attack on the Government in respect of their conduct, Mr. Chamberlain in a crowded House rose to

reply. He was giving reasons for the hopeful view he took of the early and complete pacification of South Africa following on the close of the war. One cited was a letter written by a Boer general to generals still in the field, accusing them of being enemies of their country by prolonging a hopeless war.

"He's a traitor!" shouted Mr. Dillon across the House.

"Ah!" said Mr. Chamberlain in his softest voice, "the hon. gentleman is a judge of traitors!"

A loud cheer went up from the Ministerial host, answered by groans and cries of "Oh! oh!" from the Irish camp. Mr. Dillon leaped to his feet, with pale face and flashing eyes confronting Mr. Chamberlain. For a moment the Colonial Secretary refused to give way, uproar and angry cheering filling the chamber. Then he slowly resumed his seat. Speaking with perfect composure, though a note of intense passion rang through the sentence, Mr. Dillon asked the Speaker whether it was Parliamentary language to accuse a member of being a judge of traitors.

The Speaker replied, with some asperity, that he deprecated both the interruption and the retort; but, he significantly added, Mr. Dillon had accused a soldier fighting under the British flag of being a traitor. Here a ringing cheer from the Ministerialists gave the Speaker pause. Continuing, he said if Mr. Dillon refrained from interruption he would be spared the attacks of which he complained. Mr. Dillon's response was swift, emphatic, and effective.

"Then I say the right hon. gentleman is a damned liar!"

For a moment the House sat silent, aghast at this defiance of order, which, in its deliberation and offensiveness, beats the record. Then a shout of "Order!" broke forth, hushed at discovering that the Speaker was on his feet.

"I call upon the hon. member to withdraw those words," said the Speaker sternly.

"I cannot withdraw," replied Mr. Dillon quietly.

The Speaker then formally "named" him, and Mr. Balfour, fortuitously finding on the table a book containing the formula of consequent resolution, moved that Mr. Dillon be suspended from the service of the House. On the question being put there was a general cry of "Aye!" from the Ministerial benches, answered by angry shouts of "No!" from the Irish Nationalists.

"You'd better make it a general motion to suspend us all," one cried, a suggestion approved by the cheers of his compatriots.

On the division the motion was carried by 248 votes against 48, the Opposition, with the exception of eight members, voting in vindication of order and decorum in debate.

Mr. Dillon remained seated till called on by the Speaker to withdraw, when he rose and went forth, his colleagues, as he passed, paying him the tribute of a raucous cheer. Some stood up and wildly waved their hats. Mr. John Redmond, master of himself though former rivals in the running for the leadership fell, kept his seat, neither cheering nor endangering his hat.

"I was saying, when I was interrupted," thus Mr. Chamberlain resumed his speech as if in the interval nothing particular had happened.

March 21. Overworked Senators.

There is a vulgar notion, for which Mr. Chamberlain is not altogether irresponsible, that the House of Lords is a hive of political drones who toil not neither do they spin. It is assumed that noble Lords appear in twos and threes at four o'clock in the afternoon to watch with insatiable admiration the spectacle of the Lord Chancellor,

accompanied by his Purse Bearer, escorted by Black Rod, pace the floor on his stately march to the Woolsack. As soon as he is seated their Lordships (always following the mistaken authority cited) begin to think of going home. If any two or more of their number are so ill bred as to raise debate on public questions—just as if they were mere commoners—noble Lords fix their eyes on that part of the Chamber where the clock ought to be and insist upon the affair closing in convenient time for dinner.

Let those who have permitted themselves to be ensnared by this malevolent fable consider what happened to-day. Thrice in the space of five hours the Lord High Chancellor took his seat on the Woolsack and the House of Lords was in session. Nor was it a barren session. At eleven o'clock in the morning, the Bishop of Peterborough having said prayers, Earl Waldegrave and Lord Lawrence, representing in their persons the Hereditary Chamber, passed the Appropriation Bill, a measure involving expenditure of many millions. This was not done in the niggardly fashion peculiar to the House of Commons, where intervals, sometimes of many days, intervene between the various stages of this important measure. Lord Lawrence and Lord Waldegrave, having taken the matter in hand, saw it right through. They read the Bill a first time ; they read the Bill a second time ; they skipped Committee and, with slightly flushed faces, but with unfaltering voice, they read the Bill a third time. Then the Lord High Chancellor declared it "passed," and the sitting, like Mr. John Dillon, was suspended.

This, as stated, took place at eleven o'clock in the morning when some members of the House of Commons were dawdling over a late breakfast. At three o'clock in the afternoon the indomitable House of Lords was at it again. The High Lord Chancellor, donning the scarlet robes of a peer, and wearing a cocked hat,

which, slightly tilted, gives his habitually grave countenance uncanny approach to a rollicking look, seated himself on the Woolsack. On either side of him, similarly arrayed, sat Lord Ashbourne and the most noble the Marquis of Londonderry, just dropped in from St. Martin's-le-Grand. These were "our trusty and well-beloved cousins," forming the Royal Commission authorised to give assent on behalf of His Majesty the King to the little Bill passed a few hours earlier by Lord Waldegrave and Lord Lawrence. The Speaker and the Commons being sent for in order to witness the imposing ceremony, the Clerk, murmuring "Le roy le veult," bowed low over the Bill, which straightway became an Act of Parliament.

Here, it might well be thought, the labours of the day ended. But the House of Lords, once braced up, is a whale for work. It was said of old time in respect to a well-known commercial boarding house, "Todger's can do it when it likes." Comparing great things with small, the remark may be adapted to the House of Lords. To-day the august assembly "liked." Its usual hour of meeting, a quarter-past four, found it again at work upon the business ordinary of the day. By this time the attendance was almost multitudinous. Full twenty Peers, including the Prime Minister, thronged the Chamber, which the morning hour had seen peopled by two lay Peers and a Bishop.

April 8. A Veteran Liberal.

With the falling out of the ranks of Lord Kimberley, the Liberal party, already sorely stricken, sustains irreparable loss. By no means a brilliant man, he was always a safe one. One of his colleagues in several Cabinets tells me there was no member of it whose counsel carried greater weight. Out of Parliament he was little known, not being in the habit of attending public meetings.

Few men have had longer or more varied experience

in public life. Just half a century ago he entered the Foreign Office as Under-Secretary. He has been in succession Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Secretary to the Colonies, Secretary for India, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Lord President of the Council. A remarkably facile speaker, he never said a brilliant thing and never uttered a foolish one. Gifted with a retentive memory, ranging over extensive fields of experience, having an unlimited vocabulary of words, his failing as a debater was a tendency to prosiness.

The last time I was in his company, talking about debate in the House of Lords, he told me that however important might be the pending debate in which he would have to speak he never provided himself with notes.

Earl Spencer. The leadership of the Opposition in the House of Lords will revert to Earl Spencer, who has been Lord Kimberley's locum tenens since the session opened. At the best of times it is a thankless post, made more embarrassing just now by the constant presence of Lord Rosebery below the gangway, and the imminence of his interposition in debate.

Lord Spencer's public life has for at least twenty years been a sacrifice to a sense of public duty. At a time when Ireland was almost on the verge of armed rebellion he daily faced death in discharge of the office of Lord Lieutenant. More than once in the varied changes of the Liberal party it has seemed that long-delayed reward was at hand by his selection for the Premiership. The prize always passed elsewhere, and Lord Spencer, unselfish, loyal, patriotic, went quietly on doing his duty in a less exalted position.

April 12. Mr. Chaplin In the Shade. Since Esau went home to supper and found himself supplanted by his wily brother, the human race has not known

profounder surprise, for a while taking refuge in incredulity, than that which filled the portly breast of Mr. Chaplin when he found himself stripped of Cabinet rank, eased of his salary, banished from the Treasury Bench.

For a time the blow was crushing, and he sat silent in a corner seat below the gangway, a monument of shattered hope, of unrequited excellence.

> Now is the stately column broke,
> The beacon light is quench'd in smoke,
> The trumpet's silver voice is still,
> The warder silent on the hill!

Anon came recovery, and with it meditation on the sweetness of revenge. The stately column pulled itself together. The trumpet's silver voice was once more uplifted in debate. No longer was the warder silent on the hill behind the Treasury Bench.

Mr. Chaplin.

The introduction of the new Rules of Procedure provided the ex-President of the Board of Agriculture with an opening an old Parliamentary hand was quick to grasp. It would not be becoming in one of his convictions and long associations to play into the hand of the Opposition on any purely political question. Reform of Procedure has nothing to do with Imperial politics. It is a purely business topic, on which long experience enabled the ex-minister to

speak with authority. Moreover, whilst hostile criticism from the Ministerial side could be indulged in without apprehension of turning out the Government, it had the attraction of being levelled against proposals with which Mr. Arthur Balfour is personally bound up.

Accordingly, from the first, Mr. Chaplin has, in respect of the Procedure Rules, assumed an attitude of hostility. More than once he has been found walking into the lobby shoulder to shoulder with Mr. Lloyd-George and Mr. Swift MacNeill. The latter statesman has, in fashion as flattering as it is pointed, taken him under his personal patronage. Whenever he speaks Mr. MacNeill nods his head encouragingly and approvingly, and the roar of his "Hear! hear!" well meant, is occasionally embarrassing, drowning the conclusion of sentences the House is agape to hear.

April 16. John Brown's Statue Marched off.

A member of the House of Commons recently travelling in Scotland tells me he came upon a startling apparition. It was the colossal statue of John Brown, familiar to visitors to the Balmoral grounds during the later years of Queen Victoria's life. Upon the King's accession the statue was taken down and carted away to Crathie, where it has been set up in the modest garden of John Brown's brother.

The rooms occupied by the respected gillie were, during the late Queen's lifetime, closed up and religiously preserved as Brown had left them. All his belongings have now been cleared out and the rooms thrown open.

April 21. A Message from Home.

Complaint is frequently made from the Treasury Bench of the burden placed upon over-worked clerks in various departments of the State, consequent on questions put in the House of Commons, involving the looking-up of detailed information. The War Office has, during the past three years, been the chief sufferer in this respect. Mr.

Bennett Burleigh in a letter from the front throws a vivid sidelight on the working of the system beyond the area of the public offices.

On one occasion, Mr. Burleigh writes: "The beleaguered Vryheid garrison were rained upon for five consecutive weeks, unable to signal, and cut off from all communication with the world. A glint of sunshine brought everybody about the helio to hear the first message. It was flashed from the Doornberg, near De Jaeger's Drift, and had come by authority from afar. And the text of the eagerly awaited news from the outer world was: 'Send at once a return of the number of Roman Catholic soldiers in the South Lancashire Regiment.'"

This question flashed on the beleaguered garrison, was the result of inquiry raised by one of the Irish members—I think it was Mr. John Dillon—as to the proportion of Roman Catholic chaplains to Catholic soldiers in the field.

April 26. Irish Leaders Portrayed. With Lord Charles Beresford standing against him at Woolwich there is no chance of Mr. Frank Hugh O'Donnell returning to his old quarters at Westminster. This is a pity, as the present House is not oppressed with fulness of individuality. Mr. O'Donnell was one of the most brilliant of the Irish members who twenty-seven years ago, under the callow leadership of Mr. Parnell, began to make the power of the Irish Nationalist member felt in Parliament. Gifted with intellectual qualities highly cultivated, his speeches sparkled with phrases Disraeli would not have been indisposed to father.

His return would double the embarrassment Mr. Tim Healy occasions Mr. John Redmond. The situation would be worse since Mr. Healy is only occasionally in his place to assert his independence of Mr. Redmond's leadership, and Mr. O'Donnell might be counted upon

for constant attendance. He has long severed connexion with the Irish Nationalist party, and would delight in nothing more than crossing shillelaghs with them on the floor of the House of Commons.

"Charlie" Beresford.

Failing that opportunity, he has issued for private circulation a slim volume of mordant verse. It is called "The Message of the Masters," and purports to be the metrical remarks of the ancient kings of Ireland, "who cannot rest in heaven until their lands be free." Though a quarter of a century ago

Mr. O'Donnell served under Parnell he broke with him even before the revolt in Committee-room No. 15. He thus enshrines his memory in his poem :—

A Shape of lath and plaster had late been leader there,
With puppetry and paintwork to set the folk a-stare.
There came a wind of judgment, and, lo, its place was bare.

Here is William O'Brien, done by a friendly hand :

And still and still a Talker, with Ghetto shekels paid,
Where Moy looks South on Galway, his sordid mobsmen bade
Refuse the County Honour to Ireland's New Brigade.

And here is Mr. John Dillon :

Still prosing and still posing ! Like pedant from hedge school,
Came one, sour-faced with envy, incompetent to rule,
To show no fool in motley can match a Dismal Fool.

Evidently there would be wigs on the Irish green if by grace of the electors of Woolwich Frank Hugh O'Donnell took his seat below the gangway on the Opposition side.

CHAPTER XIII

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

A Memorable Epoch.—Cost of the Boer War.—Sir William Harcourt.—Nice Distinctions.—A Peer's Privilege.—A Contrast.—The Sorrows of Signor Nannetti.—A Thrilling Story.—But a Little Mixed.—The Frog's March.

May 2. A Memorable Epoch.

To-night marks a historical epoch in the House of Commons, a memory those privileged to be present will long cherish. It was the last occasion on which Parliamentary business might be conducted under rules of procedure that have assisted at the making of much history. With the rising of the House the old order changed, giving place on Monday to the new. After its fashion the House passed the memorable milestone with unaffectedly prosaic mien.

Only Mr. Arthur Balfour seemed impressed with the momentous character of the occasion. Now that the work was accomplished, that the new pathway was entered upon, he looked timorously ahead,

> Unto the sea where no wind blows,
> Seeking the land which no one knows.

The author of the new Procedure Rules, the man who has single-handed carried them through in the face of combined opposition, could not bring himself to speak confidently of their dim future. All he ventured to say was that the old system had become intolerable, that whatever failings time and experience

might disclose in the new, the House at least could not be worse off.

Constitutional modesty, made morbid by the weariness following on an all-night sitting, was responsible for this uninspiring comment. Mr. Balfour might justly have trumpeted the accomplishment of his labour upon a higher note. Taking them altogether, the new Rules are admirably framed for the purpose of placing the House of Commons on a level in the matter of command of its own resources with lesser institutions, such as Town Councils or Boards of Guardians. A long stride has been taken in the desirable direction of delivering the House of Commons from the tyranny of the minority, frequently represented by an individual of the standing of Mr. Swift MacNeill or Mr. Channing. Born in other times, brought up under different manners, the House was imbued with fanatical desire to protect the rights of the minority. It was a set of rules drafted in that very proper spirit that made possible, twenty-seven years ago, the birth of the Parnellite party, and the humiliating disorganization and discomfiture of authority that followed.

May 5. Cost of the Boer War. A paper has just been issued setting forth the accrued and estimated cost of the war up to the end of the financial year, March 31, 1903. It amounts within a trifle to two hundred and twenty-three millions sterling.

With these figures before me I recall a passage in the debate in the session hastily summoned in October, 1899, following close upon Mr. Kruger's ultimatum. The Government asked for a vote of ten millions. It was not positively asserted that the sum would meet all the charges of the war. Certainly it would carry it on till Parliament was summoned for the usual sittings in February, when, if necessary, fresh provi-

sion would be made. Mr. Labouchere, speaking in Committee of Ways and Means, declared his opinion that before the war was over it would cost the country a hundred millions.

Over the gulf of two years and a half I can hear echo of the burst of laughter and ironical cheering with which this prophecy was greeted by Ministerialists. Probably the Member for Northampton did not thoroughly believe his own forecast. He is accustomed to put things boldly. One hundred millions is a phrase that rolls glibly off the tongue. So he used it. The significant, historical thing is the genuine amusement created in the lightsome-hearted House by the utterance of the prophet of evil. Why, Redvers Buller would be in Pretoria by Christmas, and there would be some change out of the ten millions then being voted.

If some hand had written on the wall the precise figures realized, £222,974,000, a sudden silence would have fallen on the laughing throng.

May 12. Sir William Harcourt.

Members listening to-night to Sir William Harcourt's onslaught on the Budget were moved by consideration that possibly it may be his last contribution to debate in the Chamber where for nearly forty years he has been a prominent figure. In circles likely to be well informed on the subject it is understood that on the King's personal initiative a Peerage will be offered to him before the Coronation.[1] Bestowal of the honour will have the hearty personal assent of Lord Salisbury, Mr. Arthur Balfour, and their colleagues in both Houses. All his life Sir William has been a fierce fighter. He has given hard knocks, and has received them. But his personal popularity rather increases than diminishes, and is warmest amongst those who

[1] The offer was duly made and respectfully declined.

know him most intimately. Of the Cabinet in which Mr. Chamberlain sat up to 1885 Sir William Harcourt is the only member who has preserved unbroken social relations with his ancient colleague.

To pass the closing years of his life in the dull serenity of the House of Lords would seem an inartistic ending for the career of the stout old Radical. There was a period long ago when the change seemed imminent. But it would have taken place in quite other circumstances. It was no secret when Mr. Gladstone formed his third Administration that Sir William Harcourt's eyes turned fondly upon the Woolsack. Other arrangements were made, and he finally drifted into the position, impossible for himself, fatal to the Liberal party, of leading the House of Commons under the Premiership of his former Under-Secretary at the Home Office.

"Onslaught on the Budget."

May 13. Nice Distinctions. A curious difficulty illustrating the fantastic division of authority at the Palace of Westminster has arisen in connexion with the luncheons for Lords and Commons proposing

to attend the ceremony of the Coronation in the Abbey. The House of Lords were first in the field, appointing a Committee to arrange the details. It was settled that luncheon should be spread in the spacious gallery where last year Earl Russell stood his trial on the charge of bigamy. The Lords were to approach the banqueting hall by Westminster Hall, the most convenient access from the Abbey. Later the House of Commons Kitchen Committee completed arrangements for providing luncheon for members and their wives in Westminster Hall. That, of course, precluded the Lords from using this spacious avenue for approach to their luncheon.

Nevertheless they were masters of the situation. While Westminster Hall is under the jurisdiction of a representative of the House of Commons in the person of the First Commissioner of Works, the row of steps at the farther end giving access to the central hall of the House of Commons and its kitchens are the territory of the Lord Great Chamberlain. Without its free and full use luncheon in the Hall would be an impossibility. After some correspondence the Lords graciously gave way. They have arranged to reach their luncheon hall by the entrance in Old Palace Yard, and the Commons will have undisputed possession of Westminster Hall and its approaches. For the Peers' luncheon covers will be laid for 600, more than half being ladies.

May 14. A Peer's Privilege. The story of the eighth Earl of Egmont, who yesterday appeared in the police court, insisting by his privilege as a Peer upon keeping his hat on whilst he paid 5*s.* and costs for being drunk and disorderly in Piccadilly, is not the least interesting of the romances of the Peerage. When, five years ago, he succeeded his cousin, the seventh Earl of a noble race, he was nowhere to be

found. After long search he was discovered occupying the humble but honourable position of hall porter in a second-class London club. This was a variation on earlier labours in Australia, where, amongst other means of obtaining a livelihood, he worked as a navvy.

The barony on which the Earldom is founded goes back to 1715. There was a baronet in the family as far back as the year 1661. The full style of the noble Lord is Baron Perceval of Burton, Viscount Perceval of Kanturk, Baron Arden of Lohort Castle, Baron Lovell and Holland of Enmore, Baron Arden of Arden, Earl of Egmont. On his way to Piccadilly, if inclined to revisit the scene of his midnight adventure, the noble Earl can look in on the House of Lords and vote on the education question or any other of high State policy affecting the progress and prosperity of the nation. Anyhow, he is patron of eight livings.

The present Earl, who married a lady of South Carolina, is childless, his heir presumptive being his brother, Charles John Perceval. Born in New Zealand thirty-four years ago, he, like the head of the family, has led a roving life. He has been to sea before the mast, has served in the Natal Mounted Police, and has taken part in the rough work of the Customs on the border of Zululand. He is now resident at Port Shepstone, Natal, earning a humble, but for his modest requirements adequate, income in the Civil Service of the colony.

May 15. A Contrast. The House of Commons is the nearest possible approach to a humanized Nasmyth hammer. It can snap a bar of steel or it can gently crack a walnut. It is capable of rising to the loftiest heights, and is not infrequently found in drivelling depths. It listens without sign of emotion to news of unexpected and critical disaster in the battlefield, and it laughs till the tears run down its cheeks when

a Minister upsets a tumbler on the table or a member sits down on his hat. This afternoon constitutional peculiarity was made especially striking by reason of an event simultaneously in progress. In far-off Vereeniging the Boer leaders, still hot from the fight, are in conference, settling the question of peace or war. Upon their decision rests the issue of the lives of many men, the expenditure of more millions, the further devastation of a fair country. At Westminster, where concern for the result is at least equal to that of the Boer delegates, a fairly full muster of members sat through the long afternoon, prattling about penny chairs in parks, babbling o' green fields at Richmond and at Kew.

No one looking on would suspect that this was the Assembly that recently provided two hundred and a quarter millions to carry on the war in South Africa, these the faces that launched the ships that stormed the topless towers of Ilyium.

An appreciable portion of the sitting was devoted to discussion on the Vote of £27,500 for the upkeep of the Houses of Parliament which includes the wages of the charwomen deputed to dust the Chamber. In a speech of thirty-five minutes' duration—a rare effort of self-restraint—Mr. Dillon thrilled the Committee with tittle-tattle of the back kitchen. It appears that, like the Liberal party, the charwomen are riven into bridgeless fissures. Broadly speaking, the Liberal Opposition are divided in twain, those who follow C.-B. and those who hanker after Lord Rosebery. The charwomen serve under four leaders. To one section is committed the dusting of the galleries; to a second the wiping of the walls; to a third the cleansing of the benches; while the fourth sweep the floor. Unhappily there is doubt as to whose duty it is to sweep under the benches, which consequently remain uncleansed.

Thus the Mother of Parliaments mumbled through a May afternoon, whilst the rifle still rattles in South Africa and men hold their breath in wonder whether it is Peace or War.

May 29. The Sorrows of Signor Nannetti

Navy estimates were set down for to-day's sitting, presenting a pleasing prospect of full five hours' business-like talk about a topic of vital national interest. But something happened in distant Dublin that threatened interference with the course of petty Imperial business at Westminster. Mr. Nannetti going forth to shear a fellow-citizen had come home shorn by the police. He put a long question to the Chief Secretary, who, contenting himself with brief summary of facts, made damaging reply. Mr. Nannetti, declaring himself "dissatisfied" with the answer, asked leave to move the adjournment of the House in order to discuss the matter as one of urgent public importance.

The Member for the College Division of Dublin was christened Joseph Patrick, which promises some sense of humour. But he was born Nannetti, and, according to local tradition, came over from sunny Italy bedded on a triumphal car, warranted upon application of rotary action to produce the strains of popular music. Among her many gifts Italy does not prominently include a sense of humour in her children. The game Mr. Nannetti was put up to play was, first, to assume the character of an earnest seeker after truth. Next, with judicial air to weigh the answer given to his inquiry by the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. Thirdly, after a moment's deliberation he should have risen, delivered his verdict of dissatisfaction with the reply, and, on the spur of the moment, as it would seem, claim the privilege of moving the adjournment.

As soon as Mr. Wyndham resumed his seat, Signor

Nannetti produced from his breast pocket a manuscript, from which he read declaration that the answer (received some hours after the ink was dry) was unsatisfactory, and therefore, following the formula, he "begged leave to move," etc.

Six weeks ago the House, public business, and national interests, would have been at the mercy of Signor Nannetti. He would forthwith have made his speech at an hour's length. Mr. Dillon would have chipped in with a few remarks occupying seventy minutes in the delivery. Other Irish members would have followed, and the afternoon would have been wasted. What happened this afternoon was the Speaker's quiet intimation that, under the new Rules, motion for adjournment of the House must be deferred till the sitting was resumed at nine o'clock. The Signor accordingly resumed his seat, and a mere trifle, such as the voting of four millions eight hundred and twelve thousand seven hundred pounds for shipbuilding and repairs of the Royal Navy, took and kept the floor.

This was hard. A fresh injustice to Ireland. But what can you expect when, as Mr. Clancy observed yesterday, a foreign assembly can impose an English colleague on an Irish architect supervising the erection of public buildings in Dublin paid for out of Imperial funds? Signor Nannetti was discomfited but not cast down. The tyrant Saxon having overcome the peace-loving, simple-hearted Boer was at leisure, with added malignity, to crush hapless Ireland. Forbidden to upset ordered business arrangements in the afternoon, the Signor was not disposed to be denied his opportunity at nine o'clock. But alack! the difference. Instead of crowded benches seething in anger at the waste of time, here was an empty House, a chilled atmosphere, total impossibility of kicking up a shindy. It is an ill game piping when there is none to dance.

A Thrilling Story. Withal it was a thrilling story the Signor unfolded in the dulled ear of the unsympathetic Sergeant-at-Arms. As far as could be made out, the scene had its birth in Sligo, where a gentleman named Dodd had presumed to take a farm from which an earlier tenant was evicted on the wholly indefensible ground that he did not pay rent. Mr. Dodd, finding it in the circumstances desirable to remove from Sligo to Dublin, came to reside in Signor Nannetti's constituency. Naturally the hon. member summoned a public meeting to denounce him. The police interfered; in the riot the slim Signor escaped; dodged the police by jumping on a tram car, availing himself of his liberty to stand on the doorstep of the unhappy Dodd and denounce him to the crowd. This brought conviction with it. Next morning Mr. Dodd not only sent a five-pound note to the funds of the United Irish League, but begged to be elected a member of that influential body.

But a Little Mixed. With the kaleidoscopic effect that occasionally takes place at public meetings in Dublin, Mr. Dodd in the narrative got inextricably mixed up with an anonymous but equally iniquitous citizen who had inadvertently allowed his intention of visiting London in Coronation week to attract his neighbours' attention. "Tommy Dodd, sure to win" with his five-pound note and his card of membership of the League, drifted into the background of the Signor's oration, which came to be specifically and exclusively devoted to "the miserable creature who had declared his intentions of going to the Coronation," "the Irishman unworthy of the name who would crawl at the feet of an English monarch."

The Signor's desire to say to the crowd in the street a few words about this other gentleman was resented by the police, acting under directions of the myrmidons

of Dublin Castle. The Signor, hereditary instinct predominating, had engaged three brass bands in order to attune his arguments to the mind of the recreant contemplating excursion to London for the Coronation. Also the district was placarded with an inflammatory address to patriotic Irishmen. Two birds were killed by the one placard. It called upon Dublin citizens to condemn the conduct of "notorious Coronation flunkeys" (meaning the anonymous excursionist); and to dissociate Dublin men from sympathy with "the land and grass grabbers in cities and towns"; meaning Mr. Dodd, who had not yet forked out the five-pound note.

The Frog's March.

In the end battle royal ensued. Joseph Patrick, *né* Nannetti, combined in his person the energy of two emotionable nations. According to his own account—"I make a present of the fact to the Chief Secretary," he said, glowering across the House at Mr. Wyndham, who was wondering whether the other fellows had yet finished the dinner from which he had been untimeously snatched—he had struck at the heads of the harmless horses ridden by the police, and time after time had attempted to break through the cordon.

> And fiercer grew the fighting
> Around Nannetti's head;
> For Titus dragged him by the foot,
> And Aulus by the head.

Through the heat of battle the Signor kept his head cool, his eye on the tram car. Making with Celtic force a feint at the head of an inspector he, with Italian subtlety, dived under a horse bestridden by a member of the Constabulary, and jumping on to a tram car suddenly assumed the aspect of a private citizen going about his daily business. But surely as Black Auster knew his way to the long white street of Tusculum, after

his master Herminius was slain at the Battle of Lake Regillus, Signor Nannetti knew whither the tram car wended its way. It passed the door of Mr. Dodd, still recalcitrant. On the steps of the Dodd mansion the Signor halted a moment to offer a few remarks, when the ubiquitous police, baffled at Blessington Basin, rushed upon him and, as he explained to a scanty and sadly unsympathetic audience, "gave me the frog's march."

"And this," he cried, "was the fashion in which the people of College Green saw their representative treated!"

CHAPTER XIV

UNDER THE NEW RULES.

Making up for Lost Time.—A Chequered Career.—A Misunderstanding.—Under the New Rules.—Moving the Adjournment.—Arrangement of Sittings.—Certainty.—A Distinguished Stranger.—Disappointed.—A Coronation Luncheon.—Mark Lockwood's Strategy.

June 5. Making up for Lost Time.

REDMOND *cadet* back again, after eleemosynary mission to United States, resolved to make up for lost time in the way of cheap advertisement at Westminster, and did not pay gentlemen opposite the compliment of disguising his intent. He blustered on to the stage with his deliberate purpose as plainly indicated as if he wore a label round his neck bearing the legend "I am going to make a bally row. I am going to make you and your newspapers give me, for nothing, an advertisement that will take the shine out of all my colleagues in the representation of Ireland, and will make the mobs I orated in the United States shout, 'Bully for Billy Redmond! We wish we had given him a dollar for every quarter we dropped in his hat!'"

It seemed at first as if the deliberate effort would be a failure. Gentlemen in the Ministerial camp, grateful for small mercies in the way of amusement, have always been inclined to treat Redmond *cadet* very much as Feste is received in the city of Illyria where the comedy of *Twelfth Night* is played. Observing maintenance of this attitude he felt he must go one better. Members only smiled when he declared it a

shameful and disgraceful thing that the Commander-in-Chief should receive a gift of £50,000 when the soldiers were allowed to drift into the workhouse. They laughed outright when he observed that the proceedings of the day were covering the House and the country with ridicule. There was more disconcerting laughter when he shouted " the history of the last two or three years has covered the name of the English people with eternal discredit and disgrace."

Evidently members did not care for general vituperation addressed to themselves personally, or to the nation at large. This would never do. He must go straight for the Commander-in-Chief, bringing against him a specific charge, the vilest, most dishonourable, it was possible to lay at the door of a soldier.

" Lord Kitchener," he shouted, " will go down to history as the general who made war on women and children."

That did the trick. Members, forgetful of the undisguised hollowness of the proceeding, blind for the moment to the obvious attempt of the histrionic endeavour, permitted a wave of indignation to sweep over them. It was an honest, honourable impulse. But it was childishly foolish, giving the whole thing away. The rest was an easy assured triumph. The stars in their courses fought for Redmond *cadet*. Had the Speaker been in the Chair short work would have been made of his performance. Had the Chairman of Ways and Means been at his post he would have been found a tough customer to deal with. The Deputy Chairman, still a prentice hand, lacking long and constant training, chanced to preside. It is small blame to him if he was not equal to the planned occasion suddenly sprung on the Committee.

Once launched on the stormy sea, still stung by the vile accusation brought against a soldier absent in the service of his country, the Ministerialists kept up the

Redmond cadet.

roar of "'Vide, 'Vide." For a man accustomed to the incidents of an election contest in County Clare or Galway the game was easy to play. Redmond *cadet* had only to stand at ease whilst hon. gentlemen opposite shouted, watch for approach to a lull in the uproar, and bellow a few words. The roar rising again gave him pause and rest. When they had shouted themselves temporarily breathless another half a dozen words set them going again, and so *da capo*.

June 6. A Chequered Career.

Mr. Cumming Macdona, who with fine impartiality to-day successively voted Aye and No on the second reading of the Midwives Bill, cannot beat an earlier record in his career. After leaving Oxford he took holy orders, and for eight years was rector of Cheadle, in Cheshire. His promising career was cut short by a perhaps unparalleled accident. Officiating at a marriage ceremony, he joined the wrong couple in holy matrimony.

The bridegroom, being of bashful disposition, got a little in the background. The best man, not suffering from kindred weakness, accidentally, perhaps unconsciously, edged himself into the front.

"Wilt thou," said the Rector at the critical moment, addressing the groomsman, "have this woman to thy wedded wife?"

"I will," said the person addressed, living up to his titular position as the "best man."

"Wilt thou," continued the Rector, turning to the woman, "have this man to thy wedded husband?"

"I will," whispered the bride, and before they knew where they were they were man and wife.

This contretemps convinced Mr. Macdona that he was not meant for the Church. He accordingly cast off the rector's surplice, and, getting called to the Bar, put on the gown of a barrister-at-law. He next went into Parliament, and as he represented Southwark for ten years he ought to know his way about the division lobbies. How mortal man after voting in the No Lobby could immediately afterward find himself voting in the Aye Lobby is an achievement possible only to the ex-rector of Cheadle. The simple explanation is that Mr. Macdona was writing at one of the tables in the Aye Lobby when the division bell rang. He passed out into the No Lobby to vote against the bill. This duty performed, he hurried back to the Aye Lobby to complete his correspondence. Discovered at the table, the tellers mischievously pounced down upon him, insisting that since he was in the lobby he must needs vote. He had no alternative, but when the figures were announced he, amid boisterous laughter, made a clean breast to the Speaker of his adventure.

June 9. A Misunderstanding.

Lord Onslow, formerly Governor of New Zealand, tells me a charming story about Mr. Seddon, whose towering figure and strong personality loom large in the group of Colonial Premiers gathered in London for the Coronation. At the time he was Governor, Mr. Seddon was pursuing his daily avocation as a mechanical engineer. He had a seat in the New Zealand Parliament, but as yet had not made his mark. Coming across him one day on the

racecourse at Wellington, the Governor, most hospitable of men, invited him to dine and sleep at Government House. The invitation was cordially accepted and the engagement kept.

On the next morning it was observed that the guest's place at the breakfast table was vacant. The incident excited no concern, it being assumed that he had breakfasted in his room. Later discovery was made that not only had Mr. Seddon departed, but had carried with him his modest baggage. In the afternoon the Governor's aide-de-camp coming across the flitting guest, mentioned the regret of his Excellency at not meeting him at breakfast.

"Why," said Mr. Seddon, "the Governor never asked me to breakfast. He said 'dine and sleep.' I had a very good dinner, an excellent night's rest, and then, of course, I went away."

This retiring disposition is not consonant with the general view of the New Zealand Premier's character in its later development. But the story is quite true.

June 16. Under the New Rules.

The New Rules of Procedure have been nearly six weeks in operation, and the House has had fair opportunity of appreciating their value. Very early it became apparent that one haunting fear dominating debate on the rules was baseless. It was urged, with special fervour on the Opposition side, not altogether without assent from the Ministerialists, that the limitation of questions to the hard and fast line of forty-five minutes struck a fatal blow at one of the most treasured privileges of the private member. Mr. Balfour was so impressed by reiteration of this objection that he found it expedient to make an elaborate calculation proving that within the allotted time at least fifty questions could be put and answered. That, he pleaded, was really

as much as legitimate search after information would require.

With full unfettered use of their forty minutes, the private member has, since the new Rules were enforced, on no occasion used up the whole of the time. Once it happened that not a single question demanding oral reply was put to Ministers. This does not mean that curiosity was altogether absent from the day's proceedings. A fair number of questions appeared on the Paper. But those in charge of them were content to have reply made through the same silent medium. The working of this rule, at the most moderate computation, saves half an hour every sitting, an appreciable addition to the length of a working session. Nor is there any corresponding damage or default accruing to the public service. Practically, members have unrestrained opportunity for satisfying their thirst for information. What has happened is that openings for cheap personal advertisement being withdrawn the habitual advertisers have collapsed.

Apart from the time limit, the conditions under which questions are now put are wholly different. The attendance at a quarter-past two is small. The atmosphere is free from charge of electricity. There is no opening for ruthless personal vanity to obtrude itself. Consequently, insensibly but swiftly, the once occasionally dramatic, frequently tumultuous, question-hour has subsided into a matter-of-fact business function that rarely occupies more than twenty minutes, and is not infrequently discharged in one-half of that time.

Moving the Adjournment. Another plank cut from under the feet of the self-advertising or obstructive member is the new arrangement with respect to moving the adjournment of the House. In early times that liberty was enjoyed to a length that to the present

generation seems incredible. A member bent on enjoying himself at the expense of public business might, immediately on receiving a reply to a question on the Paper, interpose, and, moving the adjournment, make a long speech leading to acrimonious debate.

Such was the state of things existing when the present session opened. The new Rule simply orders that if after questions at the afternoon sitting a member asks leave to move the adjournment, and obtains the necessary permission, he must defer action till the resumption of the sitting at nine o'clock. Meanwhile, as in the recent case of Mr. Kenneth, the House goes on with its ordered work.

Arrangement of Sittings.

The most radical change of procedure effected by the new Rule is, of course, the alteration in the hours of sitting. Like other prognostications of evil, this change has falsified forecast. Immediately after the Rules came into effect there followed two debates on topics of Imperial importance. One was at the second reading of the Education Bill, the other on the Budget. Rarely have debates been sustained at a higher level than were these two, carried on between the hours of half-past two and half-past seven in the afternoon. There is, it must be admitted, one undesirable tendency that shows inclination to develop itself. Speeches are growing to intolerable length. Members catching the Speaker's eye early in the afternoon are unconsciously influenced by a sense of mighty leisure. The working of this influence is seen less with old Parliamentary hands on the two front benches, than with second or third-rate members launched on a topic with whose bearings they chance to be familiar. It has come to pass when, in a first-class debate, a member does not exceed one hour in delivering his speech, he is gratefully regarded as a man of moderate habit.

Nothing is more debilitating for debate than long speeches, save when they are of the rare quality possible to supreme genius. When it happens—a not infrequent occurrence—that mediocrity to mediocrity succeeds in speeches of sixty or even eighty minutes in length, debate is ruined. Some of us will live to see the day when speeches will be limited to twenty minutes' duration. Few men have anything useful to say that cannot be compressed within that space of time.

Another alteration of procedure regarded as revolutionary was the exchange of time and circumstance effected between Wednesdays and Fridays. Opportunity has not been forthcoming of fully testing the working of this Rule as affecting private members. Their opportunity had already sped. But a useful Bill in the hands of a private member, dealing with a matter of public interest, is just as likely to command a House on Friday as on Wednesday. If it cannot the assumption is that its loss to the State is a calamity that may be borne. Meanwhile the opportunity of a week-end holiday for the tired legislator is gratefully accepted.

Certainty. When Mr. Balfour was recommending the new Rules to an assembly which regards its ancient procedure as the Israelites looked upon the Ark of the Covenant—a thing too holy to be touched—he sagely insisted on the immense advantage that would accrue from the condition of certainty. That boon has been secured to the convenience of the individual member and the enormous advantage of public business. Formerly, a man coming down to the House never knew where he was, or how public business might stand. A private Bill, affecting the gas or sewage of a country town, or a siding on a railway, might interpose, postponing for an hour or more approach to public business.

Failing that there was an unlimited number of questions put to Ministers, with supplement of others "arising out of that answer." Then might come a motion for the adjournment, with the result, common enough in recent times, that questions ran close up to the dinner hour, and the Minister in charge of an important Bill rose at eight o'clock to explain it to empty benches. Now everything goes by clockwork, the maximum of good resulting from the change being accompanied by an imperceptible minimum of evil.

June 12. A Distinguished Stranger.

Daudi Chua, Child-King of Uganda, being through personal communication with Sir Harry Johnston properly impressed with the might and majesty of the British race, hearing that his royal brother, Edward VII, was about to be crowned, dispatched hither his principal regent, Apolo Kagwa. Regarding Apolo as he sat in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery this afternoon, his fez slightly cocked on one side, indicative of interrogative mood, it would perhaps be more correct to say that this dark gentleman, with the resolute lips and the watchful eyes, arranged the journey for himself. However that be, here he was, gazing upon the Mother of Parliaments, whose fame fills the world.

The first person that attracted his attention was Mr. Swift McNeill, alternately shaking his forefinger at the Speaker and his fist at the First Lord of the Treasury. Apolo, looking upon the expressive countenance of the descendant (by collateral line) of the late Dean Swift, was instantly attracted by something familiar in his features. This, combined with the hon. member's oratorical gestures, suggestive now of throwing the spear, anon of cutting the Home Secretary into slices as if he were a baron of beef, evidently had strange fascination for the full-blooded negro in the gallery.

Disappointed. On the whole, Apolo was disappointed. He could not understand how Mr. McNeill, having frantically waved his arms, shouted at the top of his voice, glared at the Home Secretary, and "with the greatest courtesy but with the greatest directness challenged" a statement by the First Lord of the Treasury, should in the end quietly resume his seat. Apolo, accustomed to other climes and other manners, took it for granted that Mr. McNeill's performance was the prelude to something tame in its way compared with daily incidents in Uganda when Mutesa or Mwanga was king, but still satisfying. What the visitor from Uganda naturally expected was that the hon. member would conclude his few remarks with a wild shriek, that in three steps he would cover the distance between his bench below the gangway and the Treasury Bench, and that, seizing the mace, he would bash Mr. Balfour on the head. Whether subsequently he would sit down and partake of the right hon. gentlemen's remains was a matter that would probably depend on the attitude of the other chiefs present and the state of their appetite.

Sketch of Mr. MacNeill having "Quietly Resumed his Seat."

What really happened was that the gentleman

seated by himself in a big chair, with long grey hair, nicely curled, falling over his shoulders, got up and made a palaver. Mr. McNeill quietly subsided, the First Lord of the Treasury and the Home Secretary, at whom he had been for the space of ten minutes shouting and shaking his fists, not even looking afraid.

June 26. A Coronation Luncheon.

The calamity to the King that eclipsed the gaiety of the nation, a touch of sorrow that made the whole world kin, fell on the House of Commons Kitchen Committee as a bolt out of the blue. In common with other joyous preparations for the Coronation, the luncheon in Westminster Hall was abandoned. It would be impossible to exaggerate the consequent inconvenience. Waiters had been engaged regardless of expense; wholesale orders for comestibles had been irrevocably placed; the tables were already spread in Westminster Hall. Worse still—or was this the best of it?—something like thirteen hundred twelve and sixpences jingled in the coffers of the Kitchen Committee. The waiters might be bought off by simple process of paying them. The mountains of roast beef, the plains of cold lamb, the thickets of three-legged chickens, were easily disposed of. There was, close by, the Westminster Hospital; not far off the Little Sisters of the Poor, whose capacity for cold meat is notoriously incommensurate with their physical proportions. But what about foodless members clamouring for restitution of their five half crowns?

The Kitchen Committee even in this parlous case soared to the height of circumstance. They met and drafted a proclamation after the manner of Napoleon I on the burning of Moscow. It is a masterpiece of mingled firmness and pathos.

"The Kitchen Committee of the House of Commons," thus it ran, "deeply lament the unfortunate circum-

stances that have led to the abandonment of the Coronation festivities in Westminster Hall." That is, to use a culinary metaphor perhaps not inapplicable, serving out of the milk of human kindness. Honourable members reading so far would bow their heads and murmur, "Yes, yes, quite right; those Kitchen Committee fellows aren't such a bad lot after all."

The next sentence led to marked revulsion of feeling. "It would be impossible, they find, to refund the money which has been paid for the proposed breakfast and luncheon. While acknowledging the hardship thus inflicted upon purchasers of tickets, they rely upon the good feeling of the House to place a favourable construction on their action."

As a literary production this leaves nothing to be desired. It has the dignity of a Speech from the Throne, and something more than its average grammar. Note the subtle touch of the parenthetical words "they find." Here, for the least imaginative mind, is conjured up a picture of the Kitchen Committee spending a laborious day in looking up some means of refunding the money and finding none. Then follows the appeal to the higher nature of the mere twelve-and-sixpenny luncher. "The Kitchen Committee rely upon the good feeling of the House to place a favourable construction on their action."

Old Parliamentarians will note in the closing words of this sentence a literal quotation from the consecrated speech a long line of newly elected Speakers make when they stand at the Bar of the House to receive the Sovereign's seal on the choice of the House of Commons.

Mark Lockwood's Strategy.

These sentences lead up to the finest stroke of the masterpiece. "The only return they" (the lachrymose Kitchen Committee) "can make is to allow members to partake

of luncheon and dinner to-day (Thursday) and to-morrow at the House gratuitously."

It is not unwarrantably betraying the secrets of the Kitchen if it be told that this sublime touch was due to the chairman, Colonel Mark Lockwood. It was for some time resisted by unimaginative members of the Committee. They had pouched the twelve-and-sixpences; why unload a stray half-crown? The Colonel chuckled, shook his head knowingly, even winked.

Chairman of the Kitchen Committee.

"You leave it to me," he said. "Put your trust in your chairman, and your chairman will pull you through."

Throughout yesterday the Colonel was much in evidence in the lobby and on the terrace. With hands in his trousers pockets, his hat pitched back on his head at an angle more miraculous than ever, the light of hospitality literally blazing on his war-bronzed face and his home-grown carnation, he stopped members by the way.

"Come down to lunch here to-morrow, dear boy; also on Friday. Dine, too, on both nights. Won't cost you a stiver. Kitchen Committee pay everything."

His colleagues were increasingly alarmed till to-day dawned and brought its secret. *The Scotch Estimates were down for consideration in Committee at both afternoon and evening sitting.* As usual, the attendance was limited to some thirty or forty Scotch members, and though their appetites are healthy and it was understood most of them cannily refrained from joining in the family home breakfast, the demand on the resources of the commissariat was comparatively trifling.

As for to-morrow, the House adjourns at six o'clock, and no one, not even an Irish member, stays for dinner.

Having set everything in train, the chairman of the Kitchen Committee last night secretly left London for Bishop's Hall, Romford, Essex, and won't be back for a few days.

CHAPTER XV

MR. BALFOUR, PREMIER

A Classical Scholar.—Thrilling Stories.—The Pilot Dropped.—Ancient Animosities.—The Vacuum.—The New Premier.—Mr. Chamberlain and the Premiership.—Johnston of Ballykilbeg.—A Faithful Orangeman.—"The Sick Child of the British Empire."—Two New Irish Members.

July 10. A Classical Scholar. In Committee on Irish Estimates. Dreadfully dull till Mr. Lundon interposed, clearing away melancholy with reminiscences of police perfidy. A farmer by occupation, the Member for East Limerick enjoys rare reputation adown the countryside as a master of classic languages. He made his earliest fame by a feat which testifies alike to his learning and his ready wit. Announced to speak at a roadside meeting, he observed in close attendance the inevitable policeman with the indispensable note-book ready to take down words he was prepared in advance to recognize as incendiary if not treasonable. Mr. Lundon, after a few introductory remarks of blameless bearing, began to recite in the original tongue, with slight Milesian accent, the names of the ships in Homer. The policeman and the audience were alike puzzled. But, true Irishmen, they were not going to give themselves away. They cheered vociferously; the police constable filled his notebook with hieroglyphs. When these were transcribed and sworn to before a resident magistrate, Mr. Lundon was summarily convicted and

sentenced to two months' imprisonment with hard labour.

Probably it was this circumstance that induced Mr. Lundon, in intervals of study of Hesiod, Euripides, and Xenophon, to turn his attention to the Irish constabulary. However it be, his knowledge of the force is extensive and peculiar. Question arose in debate to-night on the Constabulary vote whether the infamous plot of Sergeant Sheridan, who himself committed outrages, and with a view to professional advancement, arrested and accused innocent men, was exceptional, or whether it was the sort of thing the average constable might be counted upon to do. The task Mr. Lundon set himself to perform was to pile up cases within his personal knowledge where similar tendency had been manifested.

To this performance he brought everything necessary save an articulate voice. Master of classical languages, his hold on the English is unsteady. To make matters worse, he pitched his voice on a high note that caught unaccustomed echo in the Chamber, and thus the information conveyed was fragmentary. But to look upon Mr. Lundon as he stood and shouted, as if the Chairman of Committees were throned on the other side of the river, was to acquire conviction. Whenever he finished one anecdote he audibly smacked his lips as if still relishing its flavour. Beginning another, he folded his arms, not in the ordinary abstracted manner into which some platform speakers unconsciously fall. But with grim determination, as if he were holding down some turbulent story not fit for Parliamentary utterance.

Thrilling Stories.

Bits caught here and there of the long succession of narratives whetted the appetite for more.

"You might remimber," said Mr. Lundon, nod-

ding his head in a friendly way towards the Chairman of Committees, "a man called Maloney. Well——"

And here followed much about Mr. Maloney, not a complete sentence audible to the strained listeners, till at the end of three minutes Mr. Lundon was heard to say—"went out to India, where he was sun-struck and died."

After provokingly smacking his lips over this thrilling tale, he was off again.

"I remimber meself I was down in the West of Clare——"

Here came a period of rumbling echo. Then was distinctly heard reference to "a man who put a white handkerchief round his waist; the police were warned not to touch him, and he got off."

The nearest approach to consecutive story was an account of a personal interview with Sergeant Sheridan. A verbatim report gives the following result: "Says he, would you think I was an honest man? . . . Well what's the matter with you now, says I? . . . He stole a pair of shoes from the police. . . . However, says I . . . The Chief Secretary over there throwing a mantle about the police. . . . Now some time after that . . . Went so far as to tell me he was too far gone in liquor."

Here Mr. Lundon appropriately stopped to smack his lips and wipe them with his handkerchief.

Perhaps the story that in this fragmentary form most piqued curiosity was about a man who "under the advice of his solicitor pleaded guilty."

"At any rate," added Mr. Lundon, "he was a simple-minded man."

After apparently being hunted about from house to house he was discovered under a haystack.

"Then the case was tried over again and he was compensated."

July 12. The Pilot Dropped.

The difference between Lord Salisbury and Prince Bismarck in the case of the latter depicted in *Punch's* memorable cartoon "Dropping the Pilot," is that whereas the maker of the German Empire was dropped, the English statesman has dropped himself. The withdrawal of this stately figure from Imperial politics leaves a vacancy it will be hard, if not impossible, to fill. All his life Lord Salisbury has been a man apart, himself his only parallel. He never struck the popular fancy as did Gladstone and Disraeli. From time to time he has made his appearance on the public platform, usually in connexion with some function of the Primrose League. Otherwise, save for the pencil of the caricaturist, he might walk the streets of London safe in the assurance that he would not be recognized. This aloofness he carries into the realm of social life. The average diner-out has frequent chances of meeting other members of his Majesty's Ministry. Few outside the family circle have sat at meat with Lord Salisbury, either at his own table or at that of the *le vrai Amphytrion.*

This peculiarity has its charm for the public, on whose palate sometimes palls the frequency of contact with celebrities. In ancient Japan an analogous position wrought powerful effect. The Mikado was never beheld by the vulgar eye. He dwelt in the seclusion of his palace, a sort of deity on whom did a man look he would surely die. The Marquis of Salisbury has, in measure suited to Western civilization, been our Mikado. Even in the House of Lords he maintains aloofness, rarely conversing on the Bench with his colleagues. One exception was made in the case of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Halsbury, to whose personal charm he fell and remained a victim. Rarely a day passed when the House was in session that the Premier was not found seated on the Woolsack hobnobbing with its cheery occupant.

Ancient Animosities. It is a curious coincidence that, a man of strong prejudices and personal antipathies, it came to pass in the course of his career that Lord Salisbury was brought into cordial connexion, closest colleagueship, with two men at earlier periods

Old Cronies.

severally the object of his keenest dislike. It would be hard to say whether in and about 1867 he hated Disraeli more than in 1885 he distrusted Mr. Chamberlain, or whether the pre-eminence lay with the present Colonial Secretary. Some of the most bitter speeches of the

Member for Stamford between 1853 and 1868 were directed against Disraeli. What he was accustomed to say about Mr. Chamberlain, at the time that unregenerate Radical was going about the country with the Unauthorized Programme, was equalled in acerbity only by Mr. Chamberlain's genial allusions to him. Yet we lived to see him coming home from Berlin arm in arm with Disraeli, bringing Peace with Honour. When last week he for the last time met his Cabinet Council, he was conscious that it numbered no more loyal colleague, warmer friend, than his ancient foeman, the Member for Birmingham.

The Vacuum. As a debating assembly the House of Lords suffers irreparable loss by the silence of Lord Salisbury. Those who have lived through long years in close connexion with Parliamentary affairs know that no man is indispensable, that "we die and are forgotten." When Disraeli withdrew from the House of Commons it seemed as if its sun were set. Again, when Gladstone bade farewell to the old familiar scene, members thought they would never grow accustomed to the place in his absence. Alack! in the ordinary course of a night's sitting how many, even amongst the most faithful, turn back to the days that are no more, and lament the disappearance of its giants? The world must go round; things have to be done; somehow or other, by somebody or other, they are accomplished. Nevertheless, for a while at least, when big debate thunders in the House of Lords, old members will think of the massive figure on the front bench with its curious action preliminary to delivering a speech — the nervous rapid rising and falling of the knees, as if the Premier were engaged upon doing a hundred yards race for the golden cup.

As far as outward and visible sign went, that was

his only preparation for the most important of his speeches. He never made notes of current debate as others do. Nor did he bring down with him prepared memoranda for any statement he might have to make, however delicate and critical. He sat and listened, his knees working up and down as if on an invisible electric treadmill. When the moment came he rose, and with unerring accuracy of recollection, with sagacious judgment, in perfect phrase, replied to anything worthy of note that had been said through debate of some hours duration. His speech had that literary finish acquired by use of the pen. Every word was in its proper place, each was the very one wanted, the only one fitted for it.

July 14. The New Premier. Mr. Balfour was profoundly touched by the reception that awaited him in the House of Commons when to-day for the first time he entered it bearing the proud title of Prime Minister—successor of Pitt, Peel, Palmerston, Disraeli, Gladstone. The House was unusually filled for half-past two on a Monday afternoon. The Leader of the Opposition, whose week-end often impinges a little on Monday's sitting, was punctually at his post. The muster of Ministers and ex-Ministers was exceptionally large.

There were forty-two questions demanding oral answers. The first of five put to "the First Lord of the Treasury" was No. 37. Just before it was reached a ringing cheer from the Ministerial side announced the coming of the Premier. Mr. Balfour attempted to hide his embarrassment by studying as he walked the MS. on which was written out his answers to questions. But a flush of pleasure mantled his face. Hereupon the Leader of the Opposition interposed, with a success that was the greater because, as he said, he was guilty of the irregularity of interrupting the course of ques-

tions. He desired to offer the Premier, on his own part, and in the name of those who act with him in politics, indeed, on the part of the wider circle of the House itself—authority was promptly given by a loud cheer from the Ministerialists—warm congratulations upon the honour done him.

"I wish him success and prosperity," said Sir Henry, "not only in the formation, but in the conduct of his Administration."

Mr. Balfour, slowly rising to respond, was received with another burst of cheering, in the heartiness of which the Opposition vied with the Ministerialists. He was deeply moved, speaking in halting voice that threatened a breakdown. But he managed to get on to the end, closing with the touching sentence, spoken in faltering voice, "In fact, I am quite incapable of saying what I feel." It was a touching scene, honourable to the best traditions of an Assembly that is ever ready upon occasion to reach the highest level. The absence of premeditation, the informality, amounting to breach of order, added considerably to the effect created.

The demonstration was primarily due to the personal popularity of Lord Salisbury's successor. Undoubtedly it gained access of warmth from consideration of the fact that once again the First Minister of the Crown is seated in the House of Commons.

And last, though not least, Mr. Chamberlain was not Premier. Personal animosity towards the lost leader, ever simmering in the Radical camp, found expression in the only ungenerous title-tattle that has gained currency in connexion with the disposal of the Premiership. It was said that the occasion wherein by accident Mr. Chamberlain was confined to a sick chamber was seized to rush through Lord Salisbury's resignation and the succession of Mr. Balfour.

Mr. Chamberlain and the Premiership.

This is a fancy as idle as it is malicious. For more than two years I have, with perhaps tiresome iteration, combatted the popular idea that Mr. Chamberlain was in the running for the Premiership, and that when the crisis came he would come to grips with Mr. Balfour or any one else who stood in his way. There is no harm in now saying—indeed, it is an act of justice to a public man to make the fact known—that this view of the situation was obtained directly from Mr. Chamberlain's confidence. Something more than two years ago—it was in April 1899—I chanced to sit next to him at the dinner table of a mutual friend. There had just been published, simultaneously in the United States and on this side of the water, an article in which I responded to an invitation to discuss the prospects of the Premiership after the resignation of Lord Salisbury. Mr. Chamberlain chanced to have read it that morning, and spoke on the subject with a frankness he shared with Bismarck. I made a note at the time of his observation, and in the circumstances feel it is no breach of confidence to publish it.

"If," he said, "you want to know the truth about the matter, I will tell you. Never at any time, in any circumstances, do I intend to be Prime Minister of the Unionist party. I am ready to serve under Arthur Balfour, or any one else who may be preferred to the post. I confess it was different when I was on the other side. Fifteen years ago I was certainly resolved to be Prime Minister in the Liberal succession. If that purpose had been fulfilled you would have seen established the condition of Liberal Imperialism of which Rosebery and others futilely talk to-day."

It will be remembered that, in the spring of 1899, Lord Rosebery was much to the fore in connexion with that dissociation from sympathizers with the Boers which led to the state of things in the Liberal camp that came to be known as war to the knife and fork.

This revelation of Mr. Chamberlain's innermost frame of mind, made two years ago, disposes of all the stories about personal rivalry with Mr. Balfour resulting in the triumph of the latter, finally secured by an unworthy manœuvre.

July 18. Johnston of Ballykilbeg.

On both sides of the House, not least in the Irish quarter, expressions of regret are heard at the sudden death of William Johnston, member for South Belfast. Johnston of Ballykilbeg, to cite his familiar territorial designation, was one of the distinctive characters of the Assembly. His annals are scanty, since he rarely took part in debate. An Irish member, he never moved the adjournment, or spoke slightingly of the Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant. His contributions to debate were rather interjectionary than prolonged. The last heard from him chanced to present him in rare mood of anger. Ten days ago, Mr. T. W. Russell, rising to move the adjournment, in order to discuss as a matter of urgent public importance the relations between Lord de Freyne and his tenants, Mr. Johnston, turning upon the ex-Parliamentary Secretary of the Local Government Board, who retains his seat in the Ministerial camp, sternly said:

"Go and move it from the other side of the House."

Mr. Johnston's appearances on the scene were in the main limited to supplementing questions put by his compatriots opposite by others designed to present a totally different view of the case. His interposition was always greeted by an uproarious cheer from the Irish Nationalists, a demonstration he stonily disregarded. Although he was opposed to them, alike in politics and religion, no real animosity existed. Had any one but Johnston of Ballykilbeg uttered the comments on their conduct he occasionally dropped, there would have been a violent scene of recrimination,

They, respecting his sincerity, amused by his eccentricity, only laughed or ironically cheered.

In the session of 1896 the Irish Nationalist members lodged information against him, affirming that he had been present at a meeting where a proposal was made to kick the Crown into the Boyne. It was, of course, only their fun. But Mr. Johnston gravely explained that the diadem in question was not that worn by her most gracious Majesty —"whom Heaven long preserve"—but the one that sometime pertained to the late King James.

"Not the Queen at all, Mr. Lowther," he insisted, nodding confidentially at the Chairman of Committees.

A Faithful Orangeman.

In one respect Mr. Johnston had a chain of sympathy with his compatriots opposite. Like many of them, he entered the House of Commons viâ the prison-cell. Twenty-four years ago he took a prominent part in a prohibited Orange demonstration, held in County Down. Brought before the police magistrate, he was sentenced to a term of imprisonment. When his time was served he was triumphantly elected for the Orange stronghold, Belfast. When Mr. Disraeli came into office he bestowed upon Mr. Johnston a comfortable, well-salaried berth as Inspector of Fisheries. But his tongue was not to be tied by considerations of salary. Finding himself one day on the platform of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, at a time when "the Papists" were exceptionally active, he denounced them with a point and vigour which Earl Spencer—at the time Lord-Lieutenant—regarded as incompatible with the position and pursuits of a Fishery Inspector. Mr. Johnston was accordingly dismissed, and was soon after elected for South Belfast, a seat he retained to the day of his death.

He displayed no enmity for what was a serious blow to a man of moderate private means. Privately, he expressed the highest admiration for Mr. Gladstone, though he bitterly opposed him during the Home Rule debates. He agreed with Colonel Saunderson in threatening armed resistance should the bill become law, personally undertaking to lead 100,000 Orangemen to "line the ditch." This was merely a relapse into fiction, to which whilst in his prime he had devoted himself, publishing three novels which had some vogue, more especially in loyal Orange Lodges. In that brotherhood he ranked high, being Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Irish Lodge of Ireland and Grand Master of the Grand Black Lodge.

His life was forfeit to the cause he had at heart. In accordance with his custom, he crossed over to Ireland for the celebration of the Twelfth of July. He caught a cold, which rapidly developed pneumonia, and after a brief illness he died, fighting to the last for his principles. The doctor in attendance prescribed wine as a restorative and stimulant.

Johnston of Ballykilbeg made answer.

"I will die first":

And he did. A kind-hearted, simple-natured upright gentleman, the House could better have spared a more talkative member.

July 24. The Sick Child of the British Empire."

Since Mont Pelée broke forth and desolated a fair West Indian isle there has been nothing in the way of vitriolic eruption to equal Tim Healy's oration this afternoon in Committee on the Irish Estimates. Through long experience the House of Commons has grown accustomed to the sort of thing. But, when we come to think of it, it is on both sides, speaker and audience, a marvellous thing. Mr. John Redmond's invective, brought down on fairly written manuscript, declaimed in

practised voice, is well enough in its way. We seem to have got to the end of tolerance when on the most public platform in the world an honourable man, who chances to be a Minister to the King, is accused of conduct, proof of which, as Mr. Redmond said, would drive him forth from the House of Commons. There was, however, an artificiality in Mr. Redmond's ornate vindictiveness that robbed it of its sting.

Redmond Ainé.

It was different with that child of nature who represents North Louth. A patient listener to the debate, he had penned no note of passing points. He just stood up, eminently respectable in appearance, growing a little plump with professional prosperity, and without hesitation, the aid of manuscript, or the assistance of gesture, poured forth an unceasing lava stream of reproach and denunciation. Excellent Mr. Harris, Unionist member for Tynemouth, who immediately preceded him, found himself enveloped in the earliest flame.

"If the Nationalist members," Tim said, "instead of being taken by chance from the desk, the shop, the counter and the farm, were eighty Demosthenes, all speaking with the tongues of angels, do you think they could make any impression on the hon. member who

has just spoken ? When, in the course of time, he is rewarded with a position on the Treasury Bench and becomes Chief Secretary—he is just the timber they are made of—his invincible ignorance will cling to him still."

Lord Londonderry and Lord Cadogan from the Peers' Gallery listened to Tim's scorching tirade against Irish landlordism. Of the Irish Government he roundly declared they had not an ounce of sense among them. In turn the stream of boiling lava was turned in all directions. The marvel was twofold. First in the impassivity, the matter-of-fact manner, in which terrible denunciation was poured forth. Secondly the aloofness of the audience. The Chief Secretary on the Treasury Bench, English gentlemen on the benches opposite, right honourable members on the Front Opposition Bench, Peers in the gallery were the direct objects of attack. Instead of resenting they seemed thoroughly to enjoy the castigation of some one else. This was the triumph of intellectual superiority, combined with the gift of simple eloquence, and the quality of honest conviction.

" The sick child of the British Empire," Mr. Healy, in one of his felicitous phases, named his own distressful country. This afternoon, dangled in the arms of the Member for North Louth, the sickly child proved an uncommonly lusty, aggressive infant.

Aug. 6. Two New Irish Members.

The sitting has been notable for bringing to the front two new Irish members. The first was Mr. Duffy, Member for South Galway, of whom one does not remember to have heard before. Nor did his style of oratory induce unquenchable thirst to hear him again. To tell the truth, he is, in a Parliamentary sense, the worst type of the Irish Member. As a rule speech-making comes to that personage by nature, as reading

and writing did to Dogberry. He may not have anything to say. But words spontaneously flow, often with touch of natural eloquence, occasionally entangled in delightful incoherence. Mr. Duffy's flatulent sentences were written out in manuscript, his irrelevant gestures studied before a bit of looking-glass. He introduced a new terror into Parliamentary speech. Not content with saying nothing once, he repeated it twice sometimes thrice.

Here is one of his sentences reported verbatim: "I would say, Mr. Speaker—Mr. Speaker, I would say, that in Ireland—I would say it here to-day—in Ireland the conviction is universal—universally held by every one—that the case was concocted by the police—concocted by the police, and that this policeman—this policeman, I say, who has suffered eighteen years' imprisonment—eighteen years' long imprisonment—and is still in prison, I say it here now, still in prison—was absolutely innocent—absolutely innocent—of the crime laid to his charge—of the crime with which he was charged."

Thus, as a dog taken out for a four mile walk runs backward and forward, lengthening its delight to eight miles or a dozen, so did Mr. Duffy extend his speech by the simple process of repeating it.

The reiteration of nothingness was made more exasperating by a loud thin voice and mechanical gestures designed to be of fearsome import. Only one flash of light illumined his discourse. Speaking of his client, a policeman condemned to death for a peculiarly treacherous murder, the sentence being mercifully commuted, Mr. Duffy observed: "Now, Mr. Speaker, if this policeman was guilty, if as I say here to-day this policeman was guilty, *he had a right to be hung*."

After this it was a pleasure to listen to Mr. Tully, bull-headed, truculent, boiling with hatred of the

Saxon, but unaffected in manner, genuine in conviction. His admission of comparative guiltiness was delightful in the delicacy of its way. "I have been sent to prison six times," he said, "and four times I was innocent."

CHAPTER XVI

THE AUTUMN SESSION

Mr. Delany wants Russia and Turkey.—Mr. W. O'Brien.—Onslaught on the Premier.—Sir John Gorst.—A Wealthy Pensioner.—Mr. Chamberlain's Mission to South Africa.—"His War."—A sharp Young Man.

Oct. 16. Mr. Delany wants Russia and Turkey. As compared with former outbreaks of disorder in the House of Commons, some significant points of difference are established by the row that suddenly burst to-night at the opening of the Autumn Session. In the first place stands the obvious deliberate attention. Through the precedent four hours Irish members succeeded each other in endeavour to force the hand of the Speaker.

Mr. Delany made a supreme effort when he declared that in spite of all temptation to remain an Irishman he would, in view of Mr. George Wyndham's tyranny, prefer to be a Rooshian or a Turk. He accidentally spoiled the force of his point by his manner of presenting it.

"Give me Russia, give me Turkey," he cried aloud; of course, not meaning that he desired personal possession of those territories, but in the sense indicated above.

For a farmer and an Irish member Mr. Delany's voice lacks volume. The contrast between the enormity of his demands, and the shrillness of his voice, convulsed the House with laughter.

Amid it some paused to think how willingly they

would see the aspiration fulfilled with extension to the whole National party. The British M.P., being after all only human, must be excused if he allows his mind to linger for a moment on his gagged and down-trodden colleagues from Ireland being transplanted only for one week to Moscow or Constantinople, and in either city proclaiming in a public place their views of the Government of Tsar or Sultan as they are daily accustomed to speak of the Government of His Majesty King Edward VII. There are neither resident magistrates nor plank beds in Russia or Turkey. But in one there is Siberia, and the other the unobtrusive but effectual bowstring.

Mr. W. O'Brien.

By half-past six, after four hours' sufferance of this kind of thing, the trained and tried patience of Members was exhausted. When Mr. O'Donnell and another Irish member rose to continue the debate the benches were nearly empty. Mr. Balfour moved the closure. This was the opportunity of the Irish members. It was seized by Mr. W. O'Brien with the swiftness and boldness of an old Parliamentary hand. If anything was to be done it was now or never. Within forty-eight hours those more or less "sturdy beggar men," Redmond *ainé* and John Dillon, would land at New York. The success of the mission is a matter in which Mr. O'Brien has larger share of personal interest than the average member of the party. He has the command of money and (this is no discredit to them) without money taking the form of weekly wage, the Irish Nationalist party cannot continue to put in an appearance at Westminster. If money from outsiders be not forthcoming the party will look to Mr. William O'Brien to find it. If he shows himself less liberal than his promises, awkward consequences would follow. The Irish member at Westminster is not so patient as the

hapless tenants evicted under the Plan of Campaign have proved.

When the Speaker rose to submit the question of the closure Mr. O'Donnell, obeying the instincts even of a new and uncultured member, resumed his seat. Then Mr. O'Brien raised the cry, "O'Donnell! O'Donnell!" It was taken up by members near, and the momentarily bewildered Member for West Kerry was hustled to his feet. Once there he quickly took the cue, and commenced to speak. Here again the master hand of the obstructionist of the eighties showed itself. If Mr. O'Donnell were left alone facing the Speaker, who against his solitary voice would be enabled to sound clear the magic cry "Order! Order!" the young member might give way. Accordingly, unconscious of the humour of the situation, the Irish members having insisted that at any cost Mr. O'Donnell should be heard, proceeded to drown his voice in an incessant roar. In vain the Speaker stood remonstrant. No syllable he may have spoken rose above the turmoil.

Onslaught on the Premier.

Mr. Balfour appeared at the Table and was apparently offering a few remarks. He might as well have spoken amid the spray of the waters of Lodore. The sight of him upstanding led to fresh and startling development of the tragi-comedy.

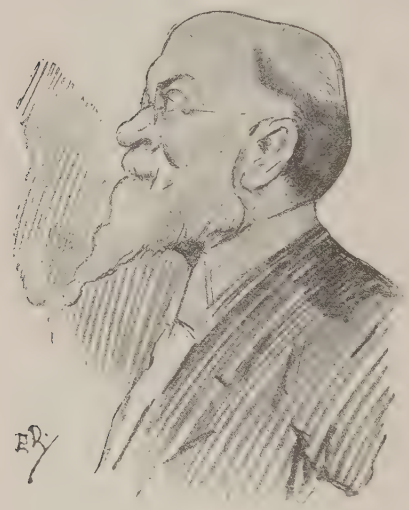
Having apparently moved a resolution which every one knew must be for the expulsion of the disorderly member, the Premier walked up to the Clerk's chair and handed in a sheet of notepaper. Turning back he, instead of going on to his seat at the gangway end of the bench, dropped into an empty place at the lower end. That was a fortunate accident. What might have happened had he been conveniently assailable at the other end of the bench, who shall say? With a frenzied shriek that for the moment rose above the incessant roar kept up by the Irish members, Mr.

O'Donnell, making a sudden turn to the left, dashed by petrified members seated along the bench, sprang down the gangway, and before the now crowded House, frozen with swift alarm, could draw its breath, he was discovered standing midway between the Table and the Treasury Bench shaking both fists in the face of the Premier, hoarsely shouting hate.

Another point of difference established by to-night's affair, as compared with earlier efforts, was the almost superhuman calmness with which this incursion of a bull in the china shop was regarded. When Mr. Plimsoll established a precedent by descending on the floor of the House and violently addressing the Prime Minister seated on the Treasury Bench, the House was riven to its centre by amazement that such things could be. For sessions afterwards it was talked of with hushed voice and scared look. To-night the outrage against order was infinitely worse, and there was, moreover, an element of personal danger every onlooker felt. This mad Mullah from West Kerry was evidently in a state of frenzy that made him unaccountable for his actions. For the moment his clenched fists beat only the air as he stood at the Treasury Bench. A single step forward would have brought them within reach of the fair face of the Prime Minister.

On Mr. Balfour's right hand sat three of his most stalwart colleagues in the Ministry. They looked on with folded arms and unperturbed countenances, as if this was the usual way of conducting debate in the Mother of Parliaments. Probably their arms were only lightly folded, and on attempt to spring forward Mr. O'Donnell would have met with a reception not unfamiliar to Irish members visiting their constituencies. As it was none of them moved, and when Mr. O'Donnell had made an end of shouting he returned to his place, was formally suspended, and the House went into Committee on the Education Bill.

Oct. 22. Sir John Gorst. Surprise was expressed that at the close of long and brilliant service to his party Sir John Gorst, superseded at the Education Board, should have been left unprovided for. It was expected that the ex-Vice-President of the Council would at least have received a comfortably-salaried governorship. The idea was the more favoured as such an arrangement would remove him from the House of Commons, where his habit of candid criticism, aggravated by feeling of personal disappointment, was not likely to prove serviceable to the Ministry.



Sir John Gorst.

Sir John tells me that the neglect lamented is only apparent. When new arrangements were made at the Education Department involving the abolition of the office of Vice-President, he was offered the Governorship of the Isle of Man. It is a snug post, with a salary of £1,700 a year and a comfortable residence not too far removed from London. As, however acceptance involved retirement from Parliamentary life, Sir John begged leave to decline the honour. Thereupon the Prime Minister offered him a pension from the fund established for the benefit of ex-Ministers whose private circumstances make such assistance desirable. It is, of course, for life, and amounts to £1,200 a year.

A Wealthy Pensioner. This is the political pension fund to which attention was pointedly called some years ago by the discovery of the scandal in connexion with the late C. P. Villiers. For more than one generation that estimable octogenarian, whose services to his country in a minor post were comprised within the term of a few years, drew his pension of £1,200 a year. When his will was proved discovery was made that through the greater part of that time he had been an immensely wealthy man.

It is a primary condition of the grant that prior to its bestowal the recipient shall make a statutory declaration that his personal resources are inadequate to the maintenance of a social position proper to an ex-Minister of the Crown. Disclosure in the case of Mr. Villiers led to the suggestion that this declaration should be repeated at brief intervals. Had such regulation been in operation during Mr. Villiers' life, the country would have been saved some thousands of pounds. A conscience sufficiently hardened to accept quarterly payment of a pension obtained under non-existent circumstances might shrink from affirming on oath what was no longer true.

Oct. 31. Mr. Chamberlain's Mission to South Africa. The spectacle of the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, of Highbury, Moor Green, Birmingham, sailing over West African sunlit seas in the newest, finest cruiser of the British Navy, what time the universe breathlessly looks on, is one the mind lingers over with keen delight. The shout of Europe bidding him God-speed on his mission will be drowned by the acclaim of Africa welcoming him to its shore. It would not be safe to say that this is the zenith of a marvellous career. That seemed to be reached when the risen hope of the Radical Party was inducted to a dominant position in a Cabinet presided over by the Marquis of Salisbury.

Whilst he still lives, and smokes large cigars, it would not be safe to assume that Mr. Chamberlain has reached his apex. His position to-day is, however, as near it as the most successful of public men reaches, and it is pleasant to observe that raucous personal animosity is for the moment hushed, applause and good wishes being unanimous.

What makes honest men delight in Mr. Chamberlain's almost unparalleled success is that it is due to sheer ability, dauntless courage. He has won his way, unhelped by advantage of birth or patronage. He presents the rare combination of a Parliamentary debater and platform speaker of the highest order, gifted with supreme business capacity, and administrative skill. He, in this respect, is without a peer. Gladstone, Disraeli, and Bright are the three men whose names stand highest on the Parliamentary roll of the last half of the nineteenth century. It cannot be said of any one that he was a great departmental administrator. Disraeli never attempted Ministerial work save at the Treasury, where it is confined to finance. Gladstone and John Bright was each in turn President of the Board of Trade. Neither made his mark upon the Department.

It is, by the way, forgotten in casual review of Mr. Gladstone's long career that he once filled the very office Mr. Chamberlain now holds, and has made the Moses' rod of the Cabinet, swallowing up in public attention others accustomed to loom larger in the story of the day. For seven months, from December 1845 to July 1846, Mr. Gladstone was Secretary of State for the Colonies. To compare his day's work at the Colonial Office and the range of his Ministerial dominion with that of Mr. Chamberlain would be to write a striking chapter in the history of England.

Mr. Chamberlain would have made his way to a front place in public life even if he had not possessed

business training or aptitude. But, after all, it is these and their fruits that make him what he is, and justify the national confidence felt in his mission to South Africa. To a Conservative Government, accustomed in co-opting its members to look rather for blood than brains, his colleagueship is a special proof of Divine favour. If we except Mr. Ritchie and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, vulgar business capacity was not the leading characteristic of Lord Salisbury's fourth Administration.

"His War."

The public, at home and abroad, have recognized that not only is Mr. Chamberlain the man to whom should be entrusted the settlement of South Africa, but that, of all men, he is the one most closely concerned in bringing affairs to a happy issue. There is much beyond spite and personal antipathy in the assertion that the war in South Africa was "Chamberlain's war." A statesman less keen-sighted, less resolute, and less courageous would, with the assistance of the slimmer among the Boers, have evaded the struggle at the particular time it came to a head. In the late summer of 1899, for probably a period of two weeks, Mr. Chamberlain—even he—deluded by Mr. Kruger, cherished the hope that war might be averted. It was a conclusion he, inspired by feeling of high patriotism, would come to with regret. From the very first he perceived that armed revolt of the Transvaal was resolved upon at Pretoria, that it was inevitable, the only question being the time at which the bolt should fall. The Boers were naturally disposed to select their own moment. Happily for us they were, in October 1899, tempted to rush things. Led astray by the knowledge, coming later to Englishmen, of the amazing unpreparedness of the War Office, believing, and the belief proved to be well founded, that they could at the outset of the hostilities drive the English into the sea, they hurled their ultimatum.

That event, deplored at the time, will, as history evolves, come to be regarded as one of the most fortunate that ever happened to this country. If the quarrel had been patched up at or after the Bloemfontein Conference, it would have been brought to a sudden head some time later, when this country, embroiled in difference with a Continental Power could ill have spared soldiers for the Transvaal. England's difficulty would have been the Transvaal's opportunity, and South Africa would have been snatched from the dominion of the Empire. Mr. Chamberlain saw this from the first, and, recognizing the homely wisdom of the adage about grasping the nettle he only once, at the period indicated, swerved from the conviction that war was inevitable. The date was July, 1899, when, as the result of mediation conducted by Mr. Hofmeyer on behalf of the Afrikander Bond, Mr. Kruger affected a disposition to admit the Uitlanders to some approach to political equality with the Boers in the government of the State. The dream shattered, the Colonial Secretary resumed his attitude of unflinching firmness in demand of a settlement of the question on the lines laid down by Sir Alfred Milner at the Bloemfontein Conference.

In this sense the war truly was Mr. Chamberlain's, and every day shows more clearly how, by his action, he averted a calamity which, as Mr. Kruger, too early prophesying, said "would stagger humanity."

Nov. 11. A Sharp Young Man.

A charming story is told in the smoking-room about a member of the House of Commons much to the fore just now as a wire-puller in Imperial politics, and an active agent in colossal industrial undertakings. He began life in the office of a country solicitor. He rose steadily to the position of head clerk. A short time after he reached this eminence he entered the private office of his

employer and mentioned that he would like to be taken into partnership. The eminent solicitor stared at him aghast.

"Why," he said, "you've no capital, no position in town or county, nothing beyond the salary I pay you."

"That is true at the present moment," said the head clerk, "but do you know I am going to be married to Miss X.?"

The eminent solicitor started. Miss X.'s father was one of the wealthiest persons in the county, well born, too, and of assured position. Conviction forced itself upon him he might do worse than take the young man into partnership.

The next day the head clerk solicited an interview with the county magnate, and asked his daughter's hand in marriage. The county magnate was stirred to even profounder depths of surprised indignation than was the eminent solicitor.

"You're a pretty cool young man," he said; "a clerk in my solicitor's office, with probably two or three hundred a year, you ask for the hand of my daughter."

"Excuse me," said the head clerk. "I didn't like to mention it before, but I am about to be taken into partnership."

That was altogether a different thing. The firm was of the highest standing, wealthy to boot. As had befallen the eminent solicitor, a new light shone on the county magnate. It brightened the way of the head clerk to the altar, to the inner office of his employer, in due time to the House of Commons, and a position growing daily in importance. The ex-head clerk has still a long way to go, and I will back him to reach his desired goal.

CHAPTER XVII

STRAINING PARTY LOYALTY

The Sugar Convention.—A Strain on Party Loyalty.—Mr. Balfour in a New Light.—A Quorum of the House of Lords.—Browsing among Amendments.—Lords and Commons.—"Thrice-boled Colwort."—A Startling Incident.

Nov. 24. The Sugar Convention.

PARLIAMENT, still comparatively young, has supplied several episodes wherein the loyalty of the Ministerial party has been sorely tried. Each has been striking in its way. All are eclipsed by the experience of to-night, when the resolution approving the Brussels Sugar Convention was carried. It is true the majority was 50 per cent. under the normal standard. Sixteen faithful Ministerialists took the extreme course of going into the lobby against their pastors and masters. The rest of the falling-off is represented by scarcely less significant abstentions. No one on either side questions the assertion that, had the Ministerial flock been unshepherded by the Whips, the resolution would have been defeated by a heavy majority. The situation was so critical, that Mr. Chamberlain winding up the debate from the Treasury Bench, opened his speech by making the pending vote one of confidence. He strengthened the appeal by affirming that if approval of the convention were withheld his Majesty's Ministers

would be discredited in the eyes of Continental nations.

A Stain on Party Loyalty.

After this there was nothing for Ministerialists but to follow the index finger of the Whips, pointing to the Aye lobby. Slowly, reluctantly they went, but instinct and habit were irresistible. Had a Liberal Ministry been in office in the same circumstances they would have been ruthlessly sacrificed by their Spartan followers. To hear Unionists talking in the freedom of the lobby, or at the dinner-table, three hours before the division was called, Mr. Balfour's First Administration seemed in a parlous state. But, with good Conservatives, incipient mutiny evaporates in talk and gloomy shaking of the head When the division bell rings, they, or, in this extreme case, three-fifths of them, pull themselves together and vote as they are bidden.

The incident supplies fresh testimony to the domination in the Cabinet of a strong man. The Sugar Bounties stand first in the category of things of which Lord Melbourne used to say, "Why can't you leave it alone?" Here, are Continental nations willing, to serve their private ends, to supply sugar to the British consumer at something less than cost price. At the Brussels Convention, the British representatives appeared in a character more fitted for Alice's Wonderland than for an ordinary business assembly. Almost on their knees, they entreated the French and German sugar exporters to put up their prices on an article in daily consumption in the myriad of British homes.

The explanation of the tragi-comedy, of course, is that, incidentally, the West Indian sugar planters will benefit. The proportion of problematic gain in that direction to the incontestable loss of the British consumer is ridiculous. But the Colonial Secretary, his generous sympathy moved on behalf of struggling

West India, convinced himself that the British workman and the rest of us could afford to make the sacrifice. As usual, in the face of whatsoever opposition, confronted by difficulties howsoever great, he got his way.

Dec. 3. Mr. Balfour in a New Light.

The spontaneous cheer that at midnight greeted Mr. Balfour as he returned from the division lobby after the last division on the Education Bill testifies to one patent result of the long and dreary fight. It has established the Premier's personal supremacy, and seated him firmly in the saddle as Leader of the House. Close attendance on this measure through a period of seven months is a big price to pay by a man of Mr. Balfour's temperament. The sacrifice has gained a priceless prize. To those long acquainted with his mercurial temperament, his constitutional aversion to drudgery round details, his management of the Education Bill has been a marvel. Only those who have actually suffered know what it is to sit hour after hour in Committee, keeping a more or less firm grasp on the position as it develops itself. For the man personally in charge of the bill, bound to follow the utterances of the most inconsiderable member, liable to be called upon at any moment to take an important decision, or make a speech on a critical issue, the strain has been superlatively great.

Mr. Balfour has borne it with a courage, a good humour and a never-failing courtesy that have strengthened his hold on the confidence, esteem, almost affection of the House, tightening through the last few years. That this feeling is not confined to the Ministerial ranks was shown to-night, members below the gangway on the Opposition side, who have been foremost and fiercest in the long fight, heartily joining in the personal tribute.

Dec. 4. **A Quorum of the House of Lords.**

In connexion with the episode of a quorum of the House of Lords sitting up after midnight waiting to receive the Education Bill after it had been read a third time in the Commons, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Ritchie) tells me a good story. It goes back to one of Lord Salisbury's earlier Administrations, when the right hon. gentleman was at the head of a Department in charge of an important measure. As in the case of the Education Bill, the third reading occupied the Commons till a late hour, the Lords having meanwhile adjourned to await its coming, in order formally to read it a second time.

Shortly after midnight the Minister in charge, strolling over to the House of Lords to see that all was in readiness, found the Chamber empty, in semi-darkness. Under the guidance of a friendly policeman he was led to a private room, where he found three gentlemen seated with three empty tumblers before them.

"Are you the House of Lords?" he asked. They nodded affirmation.

"But don't I," he said, glancing suspiciously at the table, "smell whisky and water?"

"Yes, you do," a noble Lord frankly rejoined, "and you also see the glasses are empty. If you don't have them immediatedly refilled we'll adjourn."

There was no appeal against this threat. In the House of Lords three form a quorum, endowed with full legislative power. Here were the quorum, and if they went away thirsty there could be no sitting of the House of Lords, a principal Government measure would be delayed by a day, and, so nicely are things dovetailed in the last week of the session, the prorogation would have to be deferred.

There was no help for it. The glasses were refilled at the expense of the Minister, and in due course the

bill was introduced in the House of Lords, and read a first time.

Dec. 12: Browsing among Amendments.

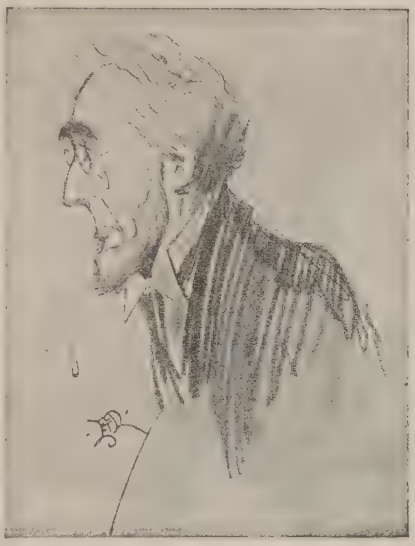
"What amendment are we discussing?" asked the Bishop of St. Asaph in Committee on the Education Bill.

"I thought," replied Lord Rosebery, "that the right reverend prelate had been in the House long enough to know the fashion in which noble Lords having a Bill in Committee browse among the amendments."

The phrase is exquisite as describing the House of Lords at work on the Education Bill. In the particular case that bewildered the Bishop of St. Asaph, Peers and prelates were engaged in discussing whether the repair of broken windows in school-houses, the unhinging of doors, and the scratching of paint should be charged to the coffers of the Church party, or whether it should be added to the burden of those Siamese twins, the taxpayer and the ratepayer. The Archbishop of York had moved an amendment requiring the managers of elementary schools, out of funds provided by them (taken from the pocket of the hapless twins), to keep the school-house in good structural repair. The Bishop of Manchester had on the Paper a more comprehensive proposal, providing that "all damage to school-houses due to wear and tear shall be made good by local authority."

The Archbishop of York having made a long speech in support of his amendment, the Bishop of Manchester followed, remarking that the opportunity seemed convenient for discussing *his* amendment, which didn't happen to be before the House. He thereupon delivered a long luminous speech, explanatory of his own amendment, ignoring that of his right reverend brother in God. Mr. J. G. Talbot, looking on from the Commons Gallery, dropped a few natural tears at this unexpected evidence that after all even Bishops have

their weak moments. When a few more speeches had been made, including the Bishop of Asaph's plaintive inquiry as to where they were, his Grace of York casually observed that he would withdraw his amendment in favour of that of his right reverend brother from Manchester.



"A Few Natural Tears."

After struggling with the problem for some time, the Chairman of Committees, slowly seeing light, effected the withdrawal of the Archbishop's amendment and the substitution of the Bishop of Manchester's. In the House of Commons this would seem to have been the appropriate time for commencing to debate the latter. But Peers and prelates having a vague idea that during the preceding two hours they had been discussing it—or peradventure something else—went forth to vote, completing the general state of topsey-turveydom by defeating the Government.

This is merely a passing incident illustrative of the appalling manner in which legislative business is carried on in the House of Lords.

Dec. 5. Lords and Commons. The dreary proceedings in the House of Lords last night and to-night were due directly to the tradition, whereby one

branch of the legislature affects to be ignorant even of the existence of the other. In the Commons it is positively a breach of order to name the House of Lords in debate. The difficulty is circumvented by speaking of it as "another place," just as if it were hell, or Connaught, or some other unmentionable locality. The Peers, with loftier manner, scorn this circumlocution. As frequently happened to-night they even allude to a member of the lower House by name. Only those within hearing can conceive the ill-suppressed scorn with which the vulgar syllables are enunciated. Lord Londonderry, for example, manages, in mentioning Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman or Sir William Harcourt, to infuse into his tone subtle suggestion that he is referring to some animals of minor classification in the Zoological Gardens scarcely worthy of their Lordships' notice.

The practical consequence of this traditional attitude of the two Houses would be comical if it were not cruel. For sixty-two days the House of Commons has been wrestling with the Education Bill. Speeches have been fairly, if, happily, not fully, reported. Illumination has been poured on the debates by innumerable leading articles. Correspondence, pamphlets, and other forms of vituperation have been diligently flung about. Successive editions of the printed Bill have been issued as swiftly as Ministers in the Commons have finished wobbling around difficult points in the original draft. Every member of the House of Lords interested in the question could not fail to be as fully primed as if he had sat through debate in the House of Commons, with the added advantage of freedom from the brain-soddening effect of the eternal talk. There was no shadow of pretence that the vote of any Peer would be influenced by what might be said in debate. To-night 147 noble Lords came down resolved to vote for the second reading of the Education Bill if the

heavens fell; thirty-seven arrived equally determined to vote against it if they didn't. For all practical purposes the division might have taken place before the dinner hour last night.

"Thrice-boiled Colwort."

That is all very well from a mere business point of view. But it does not suit the House of Lords. What happened was that yesterday the Duke of Devonshire, moving the second reading, positively spoke for an hour and a half! The idea of the play was that there was a brand new proposal, suddenly sprung on the House of Lords and the world, requiring the most minute and painstaking explanation.

This the Duke mercilessly supplied, going through the Bill from preamble to schedule, sparing no detail, in no instance refraining from repetition of things that have been said a hundred times by colleagues and friends dealing with the measure in the other House. It is only just to say that, severe as the infliction was, no one suffered so acutely as the noble Duke. To the accustomed charm of his oratory there was added the accident of a slight hoarseness. This gave to the performance the final attraction of the cawing of a crow in an autumn tree upon discovery made that another bird has secured his favourite twig. The only gleam of brightness on the saddened faces of the audience shone on the countenance of Mr. Arthur Balfour seated on the steps of the throne. His work was done. His long task handed over to another. This was his first holiday, and, after the fashion of the historic waiter who, having a night off, went out to assist a friend in laying the cloth and serving a dinner, the Premier looked in at the Lords to hear his esteemed colleague expound the Education Bill.

The Duke of Devonshire was bad enough. He had, however, the excuse, if not the justification, of being

in charge of the Bill. Moreover, as we have seen, the suffering he spread he in special degree personally shared. But what can be said for the Marquis of Londonderry? To-night, resuming the debate, he positively spoke for an hour and thirty-five minutes. The worst of this visitation was that whereas the Duke of Devonshire took the keen edge off resentment by frankly sharing the boredom created by his discourse, Lord Londonderry revelled in his opportunity. In the accidental manner peculiar to the conduct of business in the House of Lords some one late last night arranged that on the following afternoon debate should commence at four o'clock instead of half-past. The secret was so well kept that when Lord Londonderry began his speech, his audience was composed of the Lord Chancellor, the Clerks at the Table, and a spare Bishop. Even the Press Gallery was unoccupied, the secret of the altered time-table having been jealously guarded against an agency that might perhaps have proclaimed it far and near. The consequence was that the first ten minutes of the speech of the Minister of Education was lost to the world waiting at the doors.

A Startling Incident.

These are the melancholy humours of a desolate debate. There was on the opening night an episode that threatened tragedy. Whilst yesterday afternoon the benches were filling up, the tall, broad-shouldered figure of the Primate (Dr. Temple) was seen approaching. He came leaning on the arm of his son, who led the almost blind prelate to the threshold of the Chamber. Thence he groped his way to his corner seat on the front Episcopal bench, stopping at the Table to select a copy of the Orders of the Day. He followed Lord Spencer in debate. There was nothing in his appearance or his voice to indicate physical weakness, whilst his speech had all its accus-

tomed lucidity and strength. At the end of twenty minutes he was observed to be swaying on his feet, and fell back on his seat.

The thoughts of onlookers swiftly travelled back to an April evening in the old House of Lords, one hundred and twenty-four years ago, when the Earl of Chatham, rising to speak, fell back a dying man. Was history repeating itself in this weird fashion? As the Peers looked on wondering and trembling, the old Lion of the tribe of Judah struggled to his feet again. A fighting man all his life he was not going to be beaten by a passing fit of physical weakness. He had not finished his sentence when he tumbled back. He meant to do it; and he did, continuing from the interrupted word. This done he submitted to be gently led forth.

CALENDAR

*Bills marked thus, * are Government Bills.*

JANUARY.

16. *Thur.*—Parliament opened by the King in person.
H. M. Speech. Address. Debate adjourned.
17. *Fri.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Debate adjourned.
Amendment, Housing of the Working Classes, *Dr. Macnamara.* Division—For, 123. Against, 153.
20. *Mon.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Conduct of the War in South Africa, *Mr. Cawley.* Debate adjourned.
21. *Tues.*—H. M. Speech. Address. *Mr. Cawley's* Amendment. Division—For, 123. Against, 333. Debate adjourned.
22. *Wed.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Debate thereon continued and further adjourned.
23. *Thur.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Irish Land Question, *Mr. John Redmond.* Debate adjourned.
24. *Fri.*—H. M. Speech. Address. *Mr. John Redmond's* Amendment. Division—For, 134. Against, 237. Debate adjourned.
27. *Mon.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Telephone Contracts, *Sir Joseph Dimsdale.* Division—For, 139. Against, 227. Debate adjourned.
28. *Tues.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Debate adjourned.
29. *Wed.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Redistribution of Seats, *Mr. Louis Sinclair.* Division—For, 23. Against, 302. After further discussion Address agreed to.
30. *Thur.*—Rules of Procedure. Motion, *Mr. Balfour.* Division—For, 289. Against, 98.
* London Water Bill. First Reading.
* Licensing Bill. First Reading.
31. *Fri.*—Supply: Army (Supplementary) Estimates, 1901–2.

FEBRUARY.

3. *Mon.*—Famine in India. Motion, *Lord George Hamilton.* Debate adjourned.

4. *Tues.*—Established Church (Wales). Motion, *Mr. W. Jones.* Division—For, 177. Against, 218.
5. *Wed.*—Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill. Second Reading. Amendment, *Sir Francis Powell.* Division—For, 249. Against, 124. Bill read Second time, and Committed.
6. *Thur.*—Business of the House (Procedure). Amendment, *Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.* Debate adjourned.
7. *Fri.*—Business of the House (Procedure). Amendment, *Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.* Division—For, 250. Against, 160. Main Question put and agreed to.
10. *Mon.*—* Patent Law Amendment Bill. First Reading.
Business of the House (Procedure). Motion, as to Deputy-Speaker, *Mr, Balfour.* Debate adjourned.
11. *Tues.*—Business of the House (Procedure). Debate adjourned.
12. *Wed.*—Licensing Acts Amendment (Scotland) Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
13. *Thur.*—Business of the House (Procedure). Debate adjourned.
14. *Fri.*—Supply: Civil Services and Revenue Departments (Supplementary).
17. *Mon.*—Business of the House (Procedure). Debate resumed and further adjourned.
18. *Tues.*—Business of the House (Procedure). Debate resumed and further adjourned.
19. *Wed.*—Urban Site Value Rating Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 158. Against, 229.
20. *Thur.*—Business of the House (Procedure). Debate resumed and further adjourned.
21. *Fri.*—Supply: Navy Estimates. Debate adjourned.
24. *Mon.*—Supply: Navy Estimates.
25. *Tues.*—Business of the House (Supply). Motion, *Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*
Supply: First allotted day. Navy Estimates 1902–3.
26. *Wed.*—Midwives Bill. Second Reading
27. *Thur.*—* London Water Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
28. *Fri.*—Supply: Second allotted day. Civil Service and Revenue Departments Estimates, 1902–3 (Vote on Account).

MARCH.

3. *Mon.*—* London Water Bill. Second Reading. Referred to a joint Committee of both Houses.
Supply: Civil Services Excesses, 1900–1901.
4. *Tues.*—Supply: Army Estimates. Statement, *Mr. Brodrick*. Debate adjourned.
5. *Wed.*—Mines (Eight Hours) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 207. Against, 208.
6. *Thur.*—Supply: Army Estimates, 1902–3.
7. *Fri.*—Supply: THIRD allotted day. Army Estimates, 1902–3.
10. *Mon.*—Supply: FOURTH allotted day. Army Estimates, 1902–3.
11. *Tues.*—Supply: Navy Estimates, 1902–3.
12. *Wed.*—Coal Mines (Employment) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 158. Against, 224.
13. *Thur.*—Supply: FIFTH allotted day. Vote on Account. Report.
* Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. First Reading.
14. *Fri.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates, 1902–3.
17. *Mon.*—* Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. Second Reading.
Contracts for the Army in South Africa. Motion, *Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman*. Debate adjourned.
18. *Tues.*—* Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. Committee.
Contracts for the Army in South Africa. Debate resumed. Division—For, 191. Against, 346.
19. *Wed.*—Aged Pensioners Bill. Read Second time.
20. *Thur.*—* Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. Third Reading. Division—For, 240. Against, 49.
21. *Fri.*—Supply: Army Estimates, 1902–3.
24. *Mon.*—* Education (England and Wales) Bill. First Reading.
25. *Tues.*—Business of the House and Adjournment for Easter. Motion, *Mr. Balfour*.
* Land Purchase Acts (Ireland) Amendment Bill. First Reading.
26. *Wed.*—Shop Clubs Bill. Second Reading.
Adjournment for Easter Recess.

APRIL.

7. *Mon.*—* Licensing Bill. Second Reading.
8. *Tues.*—Business of the House (Procedure). Debate resumed and further adjourned.

9. *Wed.*—Rating of Machinery Bill. Second Reading.
10. *Thur.*—Business of the House (Procedure). Debate resumed and further adjourned.
11. *Fri.*—Business of the House (Procedure). Debate resumed and further adjourned.
14. *Mon.*—Ways and Means. Financial Statement, *Sir M. Hicks-Beach.*
15. *Tues.*—Ways and Means. Committee.
16. *Wed.*—Local Government (Wales and Monmouthshire) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 163. Against, 201.
17. *Thur.*—Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887 (Proclamations). Motion, *Mr. Redmond.* Division—For, 148. Against, 253.
* Loan Bill. First Reading.
18. *Fri.*—Supply: SIXTH allotted day. Revenue Departments Estimates, 1902–3.
21. *Mon.*—Ways and Means. Income Tax.
22. *Tues.*—* Finance Bill. First Reading.
23. *Wed.*—Beer Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 140. Against, 212.
24. *Thur.*—Business of the House (Procedure). Debate resumed and further adjourned.
25. *Fri.*—Business of the House (Procedure). Debate resumed and further adjourned.
28. *Mon.*—Business of the House (Procedure). Debate resumed and further adjourned.
29. *Tues.*—Business of the House (Procedure). Debate resumed and further adjourned.
30. *Wed.*—Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.

MAY.

1. *Thur.*—Business of the House (Procedure). Debate resumed.
2. *Fri.*—Business of the House (Procedure). Debate resumed.
First adjournment of the House at 6 o'clock under the New Rules.
5. *Mon.*—* Education (England and Wales) Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
6. *Tues.*—* Education (England and Wales) Bill. Second Reading. Debate resumed and further adjourned.

7. *Wed.*—* Education (England and Wales) Bill. Second Reading. Debate resumed and further adjourned.
Order in Debate (Action of Mr. Speaker). Motion, *Mr. Mooney*. Division—For, 63. Against, 398.
8. *Thur.*—Education (England and Wales) Bill. Second Reading. Division on Amendment, proposed by *Mr. Bryce*. For, 402. Against, 165.
Bill read second time and committed.
9. *Fri.*—Outdoor Relief (Friendly Societies) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 262. Against, 19.
Bishopric of Southwark Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 157. Against, 106.
12. *Mon.*—*Finance Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
13. *Tues.*—*Finance Bill. Second Reading. Debate resumed and further adjourned.
14. *Wed.*—*Finance Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 224. Against, 134.
*Loan Bill. Second Reading. Division,—For, 224. Against, 102.
15. *Thur.*—Supply: SEVENTH allotted day. Civil Services and Revenue Departments Estimates, 1902–3.
16. *Fri.*—Aged Pensioners (No. 2) Bill. Second Reading. Bill withdrawn. Adjournment for Whitsuntide Recess.
26. *Mon.*—Supply: EIGHTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1902–3.
27. *Tues.*—Supply: NINTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1902–3.
28. *Wed.*—*Loan Bill. Committee. Bill reported.
29. *Thur.*—Supply: TENTH allotted day. Navy Estimates, 1902–3.
30. *Fri.*—Supply: Civil Services, etc., 1902–3.

JUNE.

2. *Mon.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
3. *Tues.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
4. *Wed.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
*Loan Bill. Third Reading. Division—For, 216. Against, 49.
5. *Thur.*—War in South Africa (Thanks of the House to the Imperial forces). Motion, *Mr. Balfour*. Division—For, 382. Against, 42.

6. *Fri.*—Midwives Bill, as amended by the Standing Committee, considered.
9. *Mon.*—*Finance Bill. Committee.
10. *Tues.*—*Finance Bill. Committee.
11. *Wed.*—*Finance Bill. Committee.
12. *Thur.*—Supply: ELEVENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1902–3.
13. *Fri.*—Midwives Bill. Third Reading.
Shop Clubs Bill. Third Reading.
16. *Mon.*—*Finance Bill. Committee.
*Licensing Bill, as amended by the Standing Committee, considered.
17. *Tues.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
*Licensing Bill, further considered.
18. *Wed.*—*Finance Bill. Committee.
19. *Thur.*—Supply: TWELFTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1902–3.
20. *Fri.*—Supply: THIRTEENTH allotted day. Navy Estimates, 1902–3.
23. *Mon.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
24. *Tues.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee
25. *Wed.*—*Finance Bill. Third Reading. Division—For, 286. Against, 181.
26. *Thur.*—Supply: FOURTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1902–3.
27. *Fri.*—*Licensing Bill, as amended by the Standing Committee, further considered.
30. *Mon.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.

JULY.

1. *Tues.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
2. *Wed.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
3. *Thur.*—Supply: FIFTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1902–3.
4. *Fri.*—*Licensing Bill. Third Reading.
*Patent Law Amendment Bill. Second Reading.
7. *Mon.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee,
8. *Tues.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
9. *Wed.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
10. *Thur.*—Supply: SIXTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1902–3.
11. *Fri.*—London Water (re-committed) Bill. Committee.
14. *Mon.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.

15. *Tues.*—Supply: SEVENTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1902–3.
16. *Wed.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
17. *Thur.*—Supply: EIGHTEENTH allotted day. Army Estimates, 1902–3.
18. *Fri.*—*London Water (re-committed) Bill. Committee.
21. *Mon.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
22. *Tues.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
23. *Wed.*—Supply: NINETEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1902–3.
24. *Thur.*—Supply: TWENTIETH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1902–3.
25. *Fri.*—Financial Relations (England and Ireland). Motion, *Mr. Clancy*. Division—For, 117. Against, 168.
28. *Mon.*—Business of the House (Government Business). Motion, *Mr. Balfour*. Division—For, 216. Against, 158.
29. *Tues.*—Supply: TWENTY-FIRST allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1902–3.
30. *Wed.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
31. *Thur.*—Supply: Civil Services, Supplementary Estimates, 1902–3.
Army (Excesses), 1900–1901.

AUGUST.

1. *Fri.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
4. *Mon.*—Supply: TWENTY-SECOND allotted day. Army Estimates, etc., 1902–3.
5. *Tues.*—*Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. First Reading.
6. *Wed.*—*Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Second Reading.
*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
7. *Thur.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
*Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Committee.
8. *Fri.*—*Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Third Reading.
Adjournment to 16th October.

OCTOBER.

16. *Thur.*—Business of the House (Autumn Sittings). Motion' *Mr. Balfour.* Division on Main Question—For, 262. Against, 145.
*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
17. *Fri.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
20. *Mon.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
21. *Tues.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
*Expiring Laws Continuance Bill. Second Reading.
*Patent Law Amendment Bill. Third Reading.
22. *Wed.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
*Expiring Laws Continuance Bill. Committee.
24. *Thur.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
23. *Fri.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
27. *Mon.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
28. *Tues.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
29. *Wed.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
30. *Thur.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
*Expiring Laws Continuance Bill. Committee.
31. *Fri.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.

NOVEMBER.

3. *Mon.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
4. *Tues.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
Supply: Civil Service Estimates, 1902–3. Additional Estimate.
5. *Wed*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
6. *Thur.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
*Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) (No. 2) Bill. First Reading.
7. *Fri.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
10. *Mon.*—Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) (No. 2) Bill. Second Reading.
11. *Tues.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill, Procedure. Motion by *Mr. Balfour.* Division on Main Question—For, 222. Against, 103.
12. *Wed.*—*Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) (No. 2) Bill. Committee.
*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
13. *Thur.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.

14. *Fri.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
*Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) (No. 2) Bill. Third Reading.
17. *Mon.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
18. *Tues.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
*Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) (No. 2) Bill. Third Reading.
19. *Wed.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Committee.
20. *Thur.*—East India Revenue Accounts. Adjourned Debate.
21. *Fri.*—*Osborne Estate Bill. Second Reading.
24. *Mon.*—Sugar Convention (Brussels). Motion, *Mr. Gerald Balfour.*
25. *Tues.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill, as amended, considered.
26. *Wed.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill, as amended, considered.
27. *Thur.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill, as amended, considered.
28. *Fri.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill, as amended, and Reported.

DECEMBER.

1. *Mon.*—Business of the House (Rules of Procedure) further considered.
*Expiring Laws Continuance Bill. Third Reading.
2. *Tues.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Third Reading. Debate adjourned.
3. *Wed.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Third Reading. Division—For, 246. Against, 123.
4. *Thur.*—*London Water (re-committed) Bill. Considered in Committee.
5. *Fri.*—*London Water (re-committed) Bill. Considered in Committee.
8. *Mon.*—*London Water (re-committed) Bill. Considered and Reported.
9. *Tues.*—Uganda Railway (Grant) Resolution considered.
10. *Wed.*—*London Water Bill, as amended, considered and read Third time.
11. *Thur.*—Uganda Railway (Grant) Resolution reported. Bill read First time.
*Osborne Estate (re-committed) Bill. Considered in Committee and reported.

12. *Fri.*—*Local Government (Ireland) (No. 2) Bill. Reported and read Third time.
*Uganda Railway Bill. Second Reading.
Osborne Estate Bill. Third Reading.
15. *Mon.*—*Uganda Railway Bill. In Committee.
16. *Tues.*—*Uganda Railway Bill. Third Reading.
*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Lords' Amendments considered.
17. *Wed.*—*Education (England and Wales) Bill. Lords' Amendments considered.
18. *Thur.*—King's Speech.
Parliament Prorogued to 17th February, 1903.

SESSION 1903

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PHANTOM ARMY CORPS

Lord Salisbury's Last Appearance.—Downing Street and the City.—The Phantom Army Corps.—The Wire Puller.—"No Sich Persons."—In Battle Array.—Apprehension.—Collapse.—An Unfinished Sentence.—Profound Strategy.—Signor Labbi.

Feb. 17. **Lord Salisbury's Last Appearance.**

PARLIAMENT met to-day after two months' recess. The most interesting incident in the gathering of the House of Lords for the business of the Address was the reappearance of the Marquis of Salisbury. Since he retired from the Ministry he has not revisited the scene of many triumphs and some vicissitudes.

No one was thinking of him when he strolled in. No whisper was current of his intention to return. He has been absent so long that the House has grown accustomed to getting along without him. A condition which, regarded in advance, seemed impossible.

Whilst immediately after his resignation he was still talked of, and his return looked for, there was much speculation as to where he would sit in his new rôle as a private member. As with rapid step he this afternoon waddled in, apparently making straight for the Ministerial bench, onlookers long accustomed to his association with it almost expected to see him drop into his old seat. It happened at the moment to be empty, for the Duke of Devonshire, with characteristic indifference to conventionality, has not, with succession to the leadership, moved into the seat of the

Leader. Lord Salisbury, eagerly watched, passed on, crossed the gangway, and plumped down on the front bench below it.

Lord Cross occupied the corner seat corresponding with the one opposite in which Lord Rosebery, self-exiled from the Front Opposition Bench, reclines. The ex-Premier made no sign of claiming the distinctive position, seating himself lower down on the bench as if he were an ordinary Peer. In the House of Commons his reappearance would have been the signal for a demonstration of hearty goodwill. Our old nobility, made of finer-tempered stuff, successfully maintained their habitual attitude of ignorance that anything particular had happened. But they cheered almost loudly when Lord Spencer, taking note of the presence of his ancient foeman, made graceful allusion to it.

Feb. 19. Downing Street and the City.

On the Address Mr. Swift MacNeill moved an amendment calling attention to the alleged fact that of fifty-six Ministers constituting the present Administration thirty-three hold among them not less than sixty-eight directorships. If this be true it only requires public statement to bring about instant rectification. Mr. MacNeill, with his fantastic manner and his reckless exaggeration, is not the most effective advocate of the axiom that "the position of a public company director is incompatible with that of a Minister of the Crown, the union of such offices being calculated to lower the dignity of public life." Because an excitable Irish member delivers an address to the House of Commons in a voice whose volume suggests that the River Thames separates him from his audience, because he emphasizes imaginary points by indiscriminately shaking his fist at gentlemen opposite, and because in moments of extreme excitement he hops about as if he were barefooted on a hot

floor—these are not reasons why the condition of things alleged should continue to exist. Out of the mouths of babes, sucklings, and Swift MacNeill wisdom is occasionally perfected.

It is the proud boast of Englishmen that, even in the hottest moments of party dispute, no breath of slander in connexion with money matters taints the name of our public men. No one supposes that the right hon. gentlemen whose private commercial connexions were advertised by Mr. Swift MacNeill are, in their relations with public affairs, thereby influenced in the slightest degree. But every one instinctively feels it is not the right thing, and the sooner opportunity for the enemy to blaspheme is withdrawn, the better it will be for the status of public life and the advantage of the statesmen personally concerned.[1]

Feb. 23. The Phantom Army Corps.

In a full House Mr. Ernest Beckett, resuming debate on the Address, rose to move an amendment expressing regret that the organization of the land forces is unsuited to the needs of the Empire, and that no proportionate gain in strength and efficiency has resulted from the recent increase in military expenditure. His speech showed how below the gangway they have been entertaining unawares a brilliant debater.

The amendment was seconded by Major Seely, a selection that discloses a master hand in the arrangement of the forces. Mr. Beckett, addressing a thronged and pleased House, was self-possessed, bright, sparkling, delivering his thrust with grace and skill. Major Seely served admirably as a foil. His gravity was portentous; his countenance funereal. He seemed as if he had come to bury St. John Brodrick, not to scold him. The Secretary of State interrupting him with correction on a point in dispute, he paused for a moment as if waiting for the cheering sound of the tolling bell.

[1] When, in 1906, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman formed a Ministry.

Not hearing it, he remarked in slow low tones that in the absence of the bell served the purpose, "If the right hon. gentleman will make further inquiries he will convince himself that he is——"

Here there was another long pause. Members shuddered in apprehension of what might come next. The blood of the mutineers was up. They had burned their boats and were not in a frame of mind to stop short of bargee language. With whatever intention Major Seely started his sentence he concluded it with the quiet assertion "he is in error."

This was disappointing, partaking as it did of anti-climax.

The Wire Puller.

Presumably the leader of the attack and his seconder are at the bottom of the whole business. Not necessarily. Separated from them by the gangway, at home in the atmosphere of respectability that prevails on the benches immediately behind that on which His Majesty's Ministers sit, Mr. Winston Churchill regarded the scene.

Those who know the young man say it is he who has engineered the revolt against his pastors and masters, and that he deliberately designs fresh fun in the future. If there is anything in the principle of heredity, this suspicion seems not ill-founded. The position of affairs with respect to Army reform is precisely such as would have tempted Lord Randolph Churchill to action.

Two years ago Mr. Brodrick came down to the House and in the ear of a reverently listening senate described his scheme of Army reform. Popkins had a plan, and in later years Trochu had his. Neither, in respect of particularity, expansion, adaptability, or, it may be added, cost, came anywhere near the plan of the still callow Secretary of State for War. Members recall at this day how we sat thrilled as the scheme was de-

veloped ; how we admired the foresight which stationed one Army Corps in Scotland, one in Ireland, peopled Salisbury Plain with a third, and despatched three abroad to awe the universe. Two years have sped. Ten millions per annum have been added to the Army Estimates, and people are beginning to want to know where are the airy hosts ?

Thomas Didymus Winston Churchill in particular is anxious for opportunity severally to prod six Army corps in the ribs. It is quite true, as he modestly said, that he speaks with special authority on the matter. When on its introduction the Opposition, in pursuit of their duty to oppose, denounced the scheme as unsuited to the requirements of the country, Mr. Churchill alone among Unionists had the courage of his opinions and voted with them in the Division Lobby.

All can grow the flower now, for all have got the seed. It is true that after two nights' debate, which might more accurately be described as two nights' denunciation, the War Office scheme was approved by a majority precisely the same as that which welcomed its introduction. But no secret was made of the circumstances under which the division was taken. The amendment was moved on the Address, and was equivalent to a vote of censure on the Government. If it were carried Ministers would resign. A General Election would follow, and there not being even " a sort of war " going on in South Africa the consequences, personally and from a Party point of view, might be disastrous. Better a faulty, even fatal, Army system, with a sound Unionist Government in power, than national deliverance from what is described as a grave peril and C.-B. on the Treasury Bench.

After two years' consideration of the War Office scheme, Mr. Winston Churchill finds himself one of nineteen loyal Ministerialists voting against it. He has the further satisfaction of knowing that but for

the considerations indicated the number would be nearer two hundred.

"No Sich Persons." The split in the Ministerial ranks over the six Army Corps irresistibly recalls another, more classic, quarrel. Mrs. Gamp, it will be remembered, had her visionary Corps, though, less ambitious than Mr. Brodrick, she limited it to a unit and called it Mrs. Harris. A time came when her loyal crony, suspicion long awakened, was unable longer to conceal her incredulity. In a memorable scene Betsy Prig, shutting one eye, folding her arms tightly, rolling her head slowly from side to side, deliberately retorted on Mrs. Gamp's reiterated reference to Mrs. Harris, "I don't believe there's no sich a person."

Mr. Ernest Beckett's amendment to the Address was more lengthy in terms, whilst his manner and personal appearance in delivering the thunderbolt had nothing reminiscent of Betsy Prig in truculent mood. But that Mr. Brodrick's six Army Corps are the Mrs. Harris of modern armies is, under pressure, admitted on the Treasury Bench. "There's no sich persons." Nor is there, as the Secretary of State admitted to Colonel Welby on Thursday, in existence in this country at the present time the engineers, transport, commissariat and ammunition trains, the medical and veterinary services necessary to the mobility of an Army Corps. This was too much for a bluff soldier unused to metaphysics.

"Will the right hon. gentleman," the Colonel forlornly asked, "cease to use the name Army Corps until Army Corps are really formed?"

That is, perhaps, asking a little too much. Mr. Brodrick, it will be observed, has so far yielded to vulgar prejudice as to refrain from further use of the numeral six in connexion with the Army Corps. His reply to Colonel Welby on Thursday pointedly cited

"three Army Corps." That is something gained. After the manner of the ten little niggers of metrical fame the Army Corps are gradually fading on the horizon of Salisbury Plain. Two years ago there were six little Army Corps. Now there are three.

March 5. In Battle Array. The Duke of Devonshire—whose unobtrusive, unselfish devotion to the service of the State preserves the splendid traditions of his race—met to-night with rich reward. The House was gathered in unusual numbers in anticipation of a much-advertised attack on the Government. Mr. Brodrick had suffered pretty heavily in the Commons. His fate when the Lords took up his scheme of Army Reform would, by comparison, be ten times more tortuous. Lord Rosebery, apostle of efficiency, his leading principle as it affects the British Army at stake, was sure to speak. Seated on the Front Cross Bench, in the very van of battle, was "Bobs," whose private opinion on the Secretary of State for War considered as a military administrator the House and country would much like to know. Perhaps the Field Marshal, who to the daring of the lion adds something of the wisdom of the serpent, would not think the moment opportune for full and frank communication. But he must say something, and his speech standing alone would invest the occasion with rare interest.

Peeresses thronged the side galleries in unwonted number and accustomed beauty. The scene was graced by the presence of the Princess of Wales. The Prince sat attentive in the corner seat of the Front Cross Bench, as was his Royal father's wont in days gone by.

Apprehension. There was talk of at least two nights' debate, and the Duke of Devonshire—lounging in when Lord Carrington, moving a vote disclosing scanty confidence in the Secretary of State for War,

had got fairly under way—was heavy with thought of the speech he must needs make in winding it up. Already this week he had sorely suffered. On Monday the irrepressible Opposition attacked the Government from another avenue. Lord Tweedmouth raised the question of their Venezuelan policy, condemning it from inception to conclusion. The result was not electrifying, and, the Foreign Secretary having made reply, the affair was flickering out in good time for dinner, and without necessity for the Leader of the House to interpose. Then Lord Rosebery, unexpectedly quitting his lonely furrow, set the heather afire, necessitating effort on the part of the Leader of the House to stamp it out.

Not only was this conduct most inconsiderate, but there were the things Lord Rosebery said.

"The explanation of the Government as to their relations with the United States is," to quote a passage that particularly irritated the Duke, "that although there was no formal announcement of action against Venezuela until Nov. 11, there has been a colloquial understanding, a sort of exchange of winks with the American Ambassador, which was eminently satisfactory to both parties. An exchange of winks is not the way in which two great nations treat one another."

Certainly not. Then why allude to winking? As the Duke in his reply severely said, "Why the noble earl should describe all communications which are not contained in the shape of a formal despatch, as winks, I really do not know."

If it had been yawns, now, the situation would have been clear enough.

Collapse. It is the unexpected that happens in the House of Lords, and seldom has the rule been more strikingly illustrated than to-night. At ten minutes to nine o'clock the much talked-of debate,

slowly broadening down from dulness to dulness, abruptly collapsed. No one rose to follow the Foreign Secretary, and the Duke of Devonshire, to his infinite relief, found that after all he would not have to contribute a speech, probably again following Lord Rosebery. The House was already nearly empty when a division was called. It was a dolorous position for the attacking force. Earl Spencer, chivalrous and gallant leader of forlorn hopes, felt that something must be done. There flashed across his mind memory of a scene in one of Corneille's plays. Horace is lamenting the disgrace he supposes has been brought upon him by the flight of his son in combat with the Curiaces.

"*Que vouliez-vous qu'il fit contre trois?*" he was asked.

"*Qu'il mourut!*" the old man passionately replied.

The Leader of the fragment of the Liberal Opposition in the House of Lords could do nothing against the Ministerial host. But he could die on the field of battle. This Earl Spencer proceeded to do, leading into the division lobby a forlorn bodyguard of fifteen Peers. It was magnificent; but it was war only *pour rire*.

An Unfinished Sentence.

It was Simon Fraser, sixteenth Lord Lovat, who was responsible for this amazing collapse. He does not often force himself upon the attention of his peers, being a man of action rather than of words. When he rose from modest retirement on a back bench, in convenient contiguity to the door, the House turned with flattering attention to hear what he had to say. Perhaps next to the Secretary of State for War, a man who raised a corps of mounted infantry and fought his way with distinction through the South African campaign, might be supposed to know something on the question before the House.

Lord Lovat started at a hand gallop, and got along pretty well over the first half mile. Then his pace

slackened, and it became evident he was in difficulties. "This Army Corps system which——" he said thoughtfully, and pulled up short, having evidently forgotten the rest of the sentence. A man of resources, accustomed on the veldt to meet sudden emergencies, he dived deep into his trousers pockets to see if the missing link were there. Apparently finding nothing but a knife, a piece of string and a candle-end he withdrew from the search, and fixing the Lord Chancellor with stony gaze, began again.

"This Army Corps system which——"

There was the cue all right. What it led up to was clean forgotten, and with a wild look round the House Lord Lovat dropped back in his seat.

> A few can touch the magic string,
> And noisy fame is proud to win them;
> Alas for those who never sing,
> But die with all their music in them.

Profound Strategy.

The little incident is here described as it struck the looker-on. It seemed as if the dauntless leader of Lovat's Corps, who never feared to face the Boer in the field, had blenched at the spectacle of a hundred middle-aged and elderly gentlemen, including the Primate and two Bishops in lawn, representing for the moment the majesty of the House of Lords. That is not a likely story about the descendant of stout Simon Fraser, who, a little more than a hundred and fifty years ago, went blithely to the scaffold for love of Prince Charlie. The real truth is that the cleverly acted scene was a bit of strategy designed to convey a useful moral.

Here was an august, historic Assembly, bent upon wasting two whole nights in ploughing the seashore. Whatever was to be said on the subject of the War Office scheme of Army reform had been reiterated *ad nauseam* in the House of Commons. There was

nothing left for the Lords to say. Then why spend two precious nights in saying it? Lord Lovat, jealous for the fame of an Institution to which his forbears have belonged for full five hundred years, resolved to show how the thing should be done even if he sacrificed himself in the effort. Instead of making a long speech round and round the beaten ground he would, in the fewest possible words, state the problem, and stir men's minds up to wholesome effort to solve it. "This Army Corps system which——"

Which what? Why, that is for you to decide. Think the matter over quietly, deeply. Meanwhile let us get off to delayed dinner, with pleased knowledge that Tuesday next, appropriated in advance to continuance of useless debate, has been saved for real work.

March 9. Signor Labbi. A long familiar, once prominent, figure has been absent from the House of Commons since the session opened. Mr. Labouchere has not been seen in the corner seat below the gangway inherited from Lord Randolph Churchill, who thence made his early fame as leader of the Fourth Party. The fact is this uncompromising democrat, this Radical after the heart of the Northampton shoemaker, is building his soul a lordly pleasure-house in Florence, and prefers to overlook its construction rather than direct the affairs of the Empire at Westminster. It is probable that when his palace is finished and furnished (by Maple), and Labby has become a Florentine magnate of the sixteenth-century order, we shall see very little of him at Westminster. The banks of the Tiber will bask in a presence that has long abided by the Thames Embankment.

For some years past he has been drifting into the backwater of Parliamentary life. His high-water mark was reached in the session of 1885, when he was

the closest comrade, the heart's companion, of Mr. Chamberlain, then carrying through the country the fiery cross of the Unauthorised Programme. He was one of the Liberal politicians whose personal career was blasted by the introduction of the Home Rule Bill. His final disappointment came when he was left out of the Ministry formed by Mr. Gladstone in 1892. He has never since been the same man in the Parliamentary aspect, and for the last two sessions has pointedly withdrawn himself from active participation in House of Commons business.

Even the sight of his old friend "Joe," pluming himself on the purple heights of prosperity, fails in its once certain effect of bringing him to the attack with smiling countenance and bitter speech.

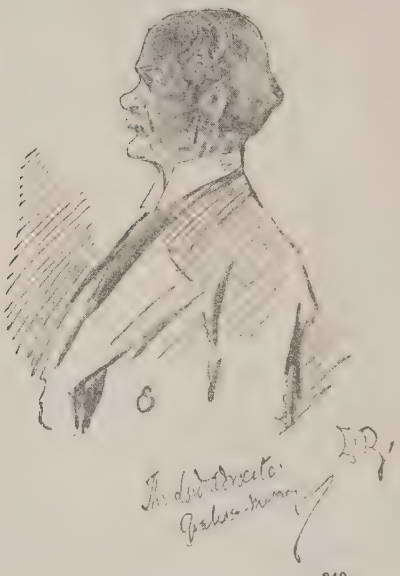
CHAPTER XIX

"SNIPING" MR. BRODRICK

"Ragging" the War Secretary.—A Solitary Horseman.—An Empty House.—"Where the War is."—A Quorum of Three.—The Irreducible Minimum.—"The Happy Warrior."—Bromley-Davenport's Washing-Book.

March 11. "Ragging" the War Secretary.

At half-past eleven o'clock to-night the empty Speaker's chair looked upon a painful scene. The House was in Committee, Mr. Jeffrys, deputy Chairman, wondering when Mr. Lowther would be well enough to take an occasional turn.



Vote 1 of the Army Estimates was under discussion, as it had been since the House met at two o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Brodrick stood alone in defence of his once-applauded Army scheme. For sole companion on the Treasury Bench he had the Lord Advocate, possibly there because his department had nothing to do with Army Stores. From dank

and rear he was attacked by his own men. The young men below the gangway were strengthened by a formidable recruit in the person of Sir Edgar Vincent, who delivered a weighty, certainly unanswered, indictment of the new Army scheme. Finally came the division, in which the Ministerial majority was run down to 91.

Had the Irish members polled their full force on the other side, Government would have been in a parlous state. They would, of course, have had a bare majority. But compared with their nominal strength the result would have been equal to a vote of censure that must have led to embarrassing consequences. Mr. George Wyndham, dropping in, rubbed his hands with pleased contentment. No longer fearful of being objurgated as a "smiling assassin," he permitted approach to a smile to illuminate his interesting countenance as he reflected on the service he had done his colleagues. He had, for the time, squared the Irish. Grateful for favours to come, they were not disposed dangerously to hamper a Government pledged to give them a dole out of the Imperial Exchequer, for all the world, as if they were English agricultural landlords, Church schools, or parsons hungry for more tithes.

This was at the morning sitting. In respect of revolt below the gangway on the Ministerial side, dashing up against the Treasury Bench, where the Secretary of State for War sat now buttressed by the visibly shrinking figure of his Financial Secretary, the morning and the evening were the same day. If anything, the evening was the more stormy. At the earlier sitting the Committee had been nominally engaged upon a matter of Imperial interest, involving as, Mr. Brodrick put it, the very existence of the Army. In the evening, still in the form of debate on the Army estimates, one of those personal questions irresistible in attraction

for the House of Commons, was to the fore. Mr. Bromley-Davenport descanted on the case of Colonel Kinloch of the Grenadier Guards, charged with winking at the bullying of subalterns.

The House, full of members who had dined, was in a state of seething excitement. From the Irish camp Mr. Swift McNeill, tumultuously enjoying himself, contributed to the conversation irrelevant but persistent bellowing. The discipline of party and consideration of its exigencies, forbade his following his instincts and "goin agin the Government" in the division lobby. But no harm could be done, whereas much personal satisfaction would be enjoyed, if he kept up a running commentary after the interjectory manner of the Bull of Bashan. This he did, meanwhile bounding about on his seat with a vigour and freedom whose possibility was enviable to subalterns of the Grenadier Guards, who, as Colonel Kenyon-Slaney delicately put it when relating his early experience in the regiment, "have been taken in hand" by their comrades and freely "ragged."

Wearied with the toils of the morning, a naturally equable temper hopelessly ruffled, Mr. Brodrick turned at bay upon his tormentors. He might have moderately controlled his wrath had it not been for the incursion of Lord Hugh Cecil. The son of the late Prime Minister, cousin of his successor, was also among the mutineers. If the matter at issue had related to Church discipline and the sanctity of some Bishops, his joining in the fray would have been natural and excusable. But what did the almost reverend Lord Hugh do in this martial galley, with Edmund Beckett at the prow and Winston Churchill at the helm? Yet there he was, from time to time wringing his hands in despair over the fatuousness of the Secretary of State for War, and saying the nastiest things in the nicest of voices.

"Perhaps," Mr. Brodrick snarled in response to the fourth of his interruptions, "the noble lord will allow me to deal with a subject which is within my province and not in any respect within his."

Whereat Mr. Swift McNeill suddenly executed a violent gymnastic exercise, and led a roar of ironical cheering from the shocked Opposition.

March 27 A Solitary Horseman. Five minutes earlier than the stroke of midnight, yesterday being Thursday, March 26, in the third year of the twentieth century, a solitary horseman[1] might have been observed pricking his way down Parliament Street. It was late for an equestrian other than Tam o' Shanter to be out. But there was that in the appearance of the horseman, caught in the flitting flame of the electric light, that forbade raillery. Some slight defect in the matter of length of limb robbed his seat of that grace and firmness to be gained only by possibility of a good knee grip. He was perhaps perched a trifle more forward on the neck of his steed than is usual outside the riding school of Mr. Tod Sloan. But the attitude, doubtless with undesigned effect, added to the safety of the excursion. With wooden or asphalted pavements thoroughly greased, the streets of London town do not afford that safe and pleasant riding enjoyed on the turfy downs of Devonshire. If your steed stumbles it is just as well to be so seated that without loss of precious time, and without embarrassment to the mare, you may throw your arms round her neck, and so break the descent.

Glancing hastily at the signal flaring from Westminster Tower, and murmuring a hasty word, the still solitary horseman pressed on across the broad way by Palace Yard, in his haste grazing the near wheel of the last Brixton 'bus. Regardless of irrelevant

[1] Lord Halsbury.

remarks from the conductor, he rode on till, reaching the gateway of the House of Lords he cried "Halt," dismounted, and throwing the reins to an attendant squire strode with nervous step across lobbies, along corridors, till he reached a room at the back of the legislative Chamber that seemed familiar to him. In an incredibly short space of time he reappeared, now wigged and robed. With added stateliness he walked into the House of Lords, illuminated by his presence and the electric light, and took his seat on the Woolsack.

"The Majesty of the Lord Chancellor filled the Woolsack."

An Empty House. It was a weird, uncanny scene. Here was the casket with its full space and adornments, its light and its colour. But where were the jewels? Only last Tuesday the Lord Chancellor beheld another sight. The benches and the floor of the House were filled. The steps of the throne

were thronged with Privy Councillors. Bright eyes rained influence from the side galleries, whilst Lord Rosebery stood at the table speaking disrespectfully of the Secretary of State for War. Here, at this midnight hour, was all the paraphernalia of legislative work. The mace was on the table; the clerks were in their chairs; the majesty of the Lord High Chancellor filled the Woolsack. Strategically scattered over the Ministerial benches, with intent to give them a crowded appearance, sat Earl Waldegrave and Lloyd, fourth Baron Kenyon, direct descendant of the Lord Chief Justice of England when George the Fourth was king.

What was the meaning of this strange midnight tryst, this secret meeting at an hour when most respectable people were in bed? It was a purely business affair, illustrating the eccentricities of legislation. The end of the financial year is at hand. Next Tuesday will see it die. In order to decent burial it is necessary that the accounts of the various spending departments, enlarged by what are delicately called Supplementary Estimates, shall be wound up. This involves the drafting and passage through both Houses of the Consolidated Fund Bill. Yesterday afternoon and evening the House of Commons pegged away at the remaining Estimates, Naval and Military, with the knowledge that whatever happened they must be completed in time to read the Consolidated Fund Bill a third time and send it on to the waiting Lords.

"Where the War is."

The haste was necessary; its concurrent inconvenience not the less regrettable. There was, for example, Mr. Labouchere "wanting to know all about the war in Somaliland," as he put it to the irresponsive Chairman. In the public mind much uncertainty lurks not only as to what they fought each other for, but as to the very locality of the battle

ground. It will be remembered that old John Willet, landlord of the Maypole Inn at Chigwell, looted at the time of the Gordon Riots, was in a similar state of dubiety as to the whereabouts of his son who had joined the Army. Actually Joe Willet (who later married Dolly Varden) was engaged at the siege of Savannah, where he lost an arm. His father, rather proud of the incident, accustomed to drag reference to it into casual conversation, got over the topographical difficulty by discreet evasion.

"My son's arm," he was wont to say, "was took off at the defence of the Salwanners, in America, where the war is."

Thus Mr. Labouchere, hungering and thirsting for information as to the locality of "Somaliland where the war is." In vain he attempted to personally interest the Chairman of Committees on the subject.

"You will be surprised, Mr. Jeffreys," he said in his most persuasive manner, "when I tell you that we have had this war sprung upon us."

"Order, order!" cried the Chairman sternly, "the honourable gentleman cannot discuss the question of the expedition to Somaliland on the vote for stores."

That was the Chairman's formal way of putting it. As a matter of fact, he knew that the Committee must rattle through these votes, involving mere millions of money, so as to get them through at a particular hour. For several days the Estimates have been before the House. If members really needed opportunity for closely examining them, and expressing opinion thereupon in business-like manner, there has been full opportunity. The time has been occupied partly in badgering the War Minister, partly in wandering round topics in wordy speech. Now the very last day possibly available was speeding, and before midnight struck the millions, weighed and unweighed, must be shovelled off the table.

A Quorum of Three. The House of Lords may, and habitually does, anything it pleases with its Standing Orders. It thinks nothing of suspending them so as to rush a Bill through all its stages at a single sitting. Meeting at their accustomed hour to-day, the Lords in twenty-five minutes disposed of their ordered business. But the sitting was not thereupon adjourned. It was suspended on the understanding that it would be resumed at midnight in order to grapple with the Consolidated Fund Bill.

To the unsophisticated stranger in the Gallery this seemed a splendid act of self-abnegation. Noble Lords, some no longer young, forsaking their firesides, eschewing their beds, would turn out in large numbers at approach to midnight, in windy March weather, and repair to Westminster to resume their legislative duties. That is a phantasy. In the House of Commons a minimum muster of forty would be necessary to the transaction of business. The House of Lords, with nice arithmetical consideration of proportionate moral and intellectual weight, centuries ago did a little rule-of-three sum. It worked out to the effect that if forty members were necessary to form a quorum in the Commons, three would liberally meet constitutional necessity in the Lords. Thus, at this midnight hour, Lord Halsbury on the Woolsack, Earl Waldegrave and Lord Kenyon peopling the benches, the House of Lords was duly constituted, capable of passing through all its stages a Bill involving the expenditure of many millions.

March 31. The Irreducible Minimum. Until to-day, the Journal of the House of Commons has never been signed by a Deputy Speaker, other than the Chairman of Ways and Means. Last Thursday the Premier moved to laughter a jaded House by proposing, "on Wednesday next to get the Speaker out of the Chair, in order to

go into Committee on the Civil Service Estimates. If we do not succeed we shall on Thursday go on getting the Speaker out of the chair."

Other, even more potent agency has been at work in that direction. Mr. Gully took the chair, as usual, at the opening of yesterday's sitting, and, though not feeling very well, sat out the questions. Later in the afternoon a threatening cold quickly developed, and when at midnight the Speaker was expected to resume the chair in order to declare the House adjourned, he was unable to leave his room.

It was in these circumstances that Mr. Jeffreys the Deputy Speaker last night took the chair, and on leaving it signed the Journal of the day's proceedings circulated with this morning's votes. It happens that the Chairman of Ways and Means is just now absent on sick leave. A year ago, in similar concatenation of circumstances, the Chairman of Ways and Means being at the time the only member authorized to act as Deputy Speaker, it would have been necessary for the House to adjourn. Last session, in anticipation of the double event that has now happened, the Standing Order was amended by the addition of a provision authorizing the House to appoint a Deputy Chairman, "entitled to exercise all the powers vested in the Chairman of Ways and Means, including his powers as Deputy Speaker."

Accordingly, when at the meeting of the House at two o'clock this afternoon the Clerk at the table announced that Mr. Speaker was unable, owing to indisposition, to take the chair, Mr. Jeffreys, in evening dress,' stepped in.

The Speaker hopes to be in his place to-morrow, but it is more likely he will not be seen till Thursday. Meanwhile Mr. Jeffreys' health is a matter of close concern to the House. He is the irreducible minimum in the resources of temporary substitutes for the

Speaker. Failing him, and with Mr. Gully still confined to his room, the House must literally shut up.

April 1. "The Happy Warrior."

There is nothing about the personal appearance or manner of Colonel Welby indicative of the fierce fire that burns below the gangway where he sits. The softness of his voice, the suavity of his manner, the furtive affection with which he regards Mr. Brodrick when chastening him, are all foreign to the actual state of affairs, and the part the Colonel plays in directing them. For more than thirty years the Member for Poplar has been a man of war. His military career was twice varied by peaceful expeditions. Once he waited on Tsar Nicholas II, assuring him of the friendly interest with which his accession to the Throne was viewed in this country. In the following year, to the great gratification of his Imperial Majesty, he renewed this assurance on the occasion of his Coronation, accepting from the Tsar's own hand the decoration of St. Anne, with its quaint device, "Do you see any one coming?" Seven years ago the Colonel retired from active pursuit of war, and turned his attention to politics. When mutiny broke out on the Ministerial benches below the gangway, the veteran ex-Colonel of the Scots Greys, sniffing the scent of battle, took joint command with some ten others, and has been active in his forays on the Treasury Bench.

Whilst, in spite of a distinguished military career, in course of which he has viewed from afar many bloody battles, the Colonel's manner is free from tone of belligerency. A little incident indicates to the clear-sighted suspicion that his peaceful mien is feigned. Recording in a well-known book of brief biographies the recreations that allure him, the Colonel wrote :— "Hunting, formerly; *shooting*."

There is the secret out. Formerly satisfied with

peaceful pursuit of the fleeting fox, the Colonel desires to make known to whom it may concern that in later life he does not hesitate to shoot. Since the phantom Army Corps have lowered over the Parliamentary horizon he has been almost daily shooting at the Treasury Bench. His shots have frequently told. But the apologetic manner in which he sights his rifle, the fond, fatherly way with which he pulls the trigger, have almost reconciled the Secretary of State for War to the discipline.

Bromley-Davenport's Washing-Book.

The sight of Mr. Brodrick on guard on the Treasury Bench does not have the spluttering effect upon the Colonel it works on Mr. Bromley-Davenport. In the extremity of his wrath that hon. gentleman has introduced a new feature into Parliamentary debate. Members feeling the necessity of assisting failing memories are accustomed when they rise to produce a few notes written on slips of paper. Mr. Bromley-Davenport brings down with him what looks like a disused washing-book. Clutching it with both hands, he picks out fresh charges against the Secretary of State, for which, like the impatient laundryman, he demands instant settlement. The book is not above suspicion of being provided with an index. Certainly, in brief pauses of passion B.-D. hurriedly looks at a back page. Wetting a truculent thumb, he rapidly turns over the leaves of the washing-book, and coming upon a particular item thunders its enormity at the head of the hapless Secretary of State for War.

One advantage of this novel application of a common household appanage is that you always have it handy when anything fresh occurs to an active mind. Suppose, for example, Mr. Bromley-Davenport walking home after the House is up, there flashes upon his mind some fresh instance of surreptitious conduct on

the part of the Secretary of State for War, whether dealing with the Grenadier Guards as an item, or with the Army Corps as a conglomeration. He halts under the nearest electric light, pulls out the washing-book from his breast-pocket, finds the letter S, and, turning to the page indicated, naturally finds the heading "Shirts." That of course has nothing to do with the argument. It is an incident inseparable from the original design of the note-book. Disregarding the heading, he pencils "Surreptitious Conduct," jotting down particulars, and any strong language that occurs to him.

Later there may flash upon his mind something suitable for the general head "Wickedness." Turning up the page indexed W, he comes on "Waistcoats." But the entry is made, the happy thought stored, and a fresh rod put in pickle for Mr. Brodrick. (Pickle naturally suggests a cross reference made for greater accuracy, and goes down on the page which in the washing-book was originally devoted to "Pantaloons.")

CHAPTER XX

ANOTHER IRISH LAND BILL

Income and Expenditure.—Mr. Hanbury.—"Tommy" Bowles.—Mr. Balfour's Conversion.—After Many Years.—The Parnellites and Mr. Gladstone.—The Transformation of Tim Healy.—Mr. George Wyndham.—A Momentous Decision.

April 23. Income and Expenditure.

A SPECIALITY about Mr. Ritchie's first Budget is the colossal grandeur of the figures he handles. It seems but a year ago I heard Mr. Childers, standing before the self-same box, pluming himself on the fact that for the first time in history the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to deal with revenue touching the round seventy-five millions. The estimate of revenue for the coming year exceeds one hundred and fifty-four millions. Unhappily, expenditure keeps pace with income, showing, indeed, fatal tendency to outstrip it. The actual income of last year, one hundred and fifty-one millions and a half, was the result of taxation on the war basis. With the income-tax at 1*s.* 3*d.* coal and corn were specially taxed. Yet the normal peace expenditure for the year amounted to one hundred and forty-four millions.

The blackest shadow on the prospect is that there is no hope of reduction of the normal expenditure. On the contrary, every year it increases. At the close

of a Titanic struggle, that has added £159,000,000 to the National Debt, wiping out the savings of fifty years, the coming financial year shows a permanent addition to normal expenditure of close upon £10,000,000. There are divers opinions of the measure of blessing that has accrued to the country under a Unionist Government. There is none as to its cost. A simple statement based on the Chancellor of the Exchequer's figures set forth this afternoon before a crowded House will afford food for cheerful reflection by the taxpayer. In 1886, when Lord Salisbury came into power after the rout of the Liberals on the Home Rule question the national expenditure amounted to a trifle over £83,000,000. This year the estimated expenditure is £143,954,000.

April 28. Mr. Hanbury. The death of Mr. Hanbury, keenly felt in the House of Commons, irreparable to the agricultural community, is a heavy blow to the Government. He was not a pushful man, nor was he head of a Department coming prominently to the fore in Imperial politics. Except when introducing legislation or getting the Board of Agriculture vote through Committee of Supply, he did not take part in debate. But he was a model Minister, admirably described by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as strenuous, industrious, frank, friendly, and accessible.

The transformation of his manner in recent years was the more striking to old members who remember how he won his way to the Treasury Bench. Forming, with Mr. Tommy Bowles and Mr. Bartley (now Sir George), the nearest approach to resurrection of the Fourth Party yet achieved, he was every night in evidence. From a corner seat behind the Front Opposition Bench he lifted his tall form and raked a Liberal Government with petty, in the aggregate effective, criticism. He did not spare his own party when they

came into office, being constant and active in criticism of the Estimates, which shortly after, as Financial Secretary to the Treasury, it became his duty to defend.

When, in 1895, Lord Salisbury again came into power, the new Fourth Party naturally thought precedent would be followed, and they would all be provided for. The event brought with it fresh mortification. Mr. Hanbury was made Financial Secretary to the Treasury, his foot on the steps of a ladder that led to Cabinet position, while Tommy Bowles and Mr. Bartley were left all forlorn. The latter has to some extent been placated by tardy bestowal of a knighthood.

"Tommy" Bowles.

The studious neglect of the former, whilst personally unjust and due to prejudice, is a matter for which an assembly suffering from predominant dulness has much to be thankful for. To have seated Tommy Bowles on the Treasury Bench, gagged with office, would have been to eclipse the gaiety of the House of Commons. The loss is all the Ministry's. During the last eight years they have had no more persistent or effective critic than the Member for King's Lynn. His Majesty's Government are not so rich in individual merit that they could afford to dispense with a brilliant recruit who is as sound in knowledge, as sharp in acumen, as he is sparkling in speech.

An analogous case of the preference of mediocrity to exceptional capacity under Lord Salisbury's Premiership is shown in the case of Sir John Gorst.

May 4. Mr. Balfour's Conversion.

If the shade of Mr. Gladstone revisits the glimpses of the gaslit ceiling of the House of Commons under which he sat for sixty years, this will have been for him a memorable night. Few things in political life are more striking or more pathetic than the swift extinction of great personal influences.

There is a stanza in "Purgatory" where Dante contrasts the fame of Provenzano Salvani filling Tuscany whilst he lived, with the faint whispers of his name heard in his own Siena forty years after his death. Mr. Gladstone has been dead scarce five years, and rarely is his name mentioned in the assembly he once dominated.

Time has brought its revenges. To-night the second reading of the latest descendant of the parent Land Bill of 1881 moved Mr. Arthur Balfour, Premier of a Unionist Government, to daze the House with confession not less startling than Sir Robert Peel's admission of conversion to Free Trade principles. In the Parliament of 1881 the young Member for Hertford was not in sufficiently prominent position to take the lead in resisting the first great effort to lighten the lot of the Irish tenant for centuries bound to the chariot wheel of the often alien landlord. In those salad days it sufficed him to lounge in the company of Lord Randolph Churchill and the two strenuous subalterns who made up the Fourth Party. But he did what he could to stay the reforming hand, and his name will be found in nearly every one of the division lists that mark its slow course to the House of Lords.

To-night Sir John Gorst, seated below the gangway, finally driven from Ministerial office, heard his young friend of twenty-two years ago denounce the Irish Land system, based to-day on infinitely juster principles than supported it in 1881, as the most intolerable the world has ever seen.

"I can," Mr. Balfour emphatically added, "imagine no fault attaching to any land system that does not make worse the Irish. Are we to sit by and see this go on, the evils not diminishing but increasing?"

A reference to Mr. Gladstone's speech on introducing the Land Bill of 1881 discloses sentences of which these are almost literally the echo. In the interval, during his repeated effort to better the intolerable, Mr. Balfour

and his political friends fought Mr. Gladstone with tireless activity, bitter animosity, which only shows how odd a thing is politics, even when practised by the highest-minded.

May 7. After Many Years.

Not the least interesting passage in Mr. Healy's speech to-night — a contribution to debate which revealed his stature towering head and shoulders above the ablest of his comrades in the Nationalist party—was his vivid reminiscence of the condition of the House of Commons in 1881. Though nominally a Liberal assembly, elected during the great reaction that followed on six years of Disraelian domination, it was by comparison more Tory in its tendencies than the avowedly Unionist Parliament of to-day. With the exception of the motley, strange-mannered crew who followed Parnell, their weekly wage disbursed by Mr. Biggar, the majority of Irish members were landlords. The main body of the Opposition belonged to the same class, which was largely represented not only in the rank and file of the Ministerialists, but on the Treasury Bench.

Mr. Arthur Balfour minimizes the effect and range of his conversion on the Irish Land system by insisting that whilst from the first he recognized its inherent iniquity, his difference with Mr. Gladstone was based solely on forms of procedure. Mr. Gladstone, he complains, tampered with the principle of free contract between landlord and tenant. The long debates of the session of 1881 will be scanned in vain for proposal or suggestion of any alternative plan put forward by Mr. Balfour or his friends. As Mr. Healy says, had Mr. Gladstone at that date proposed a scheme of peasant proprietary, the landlords acting as a body would have carried him off to a lunatic asylum.

The Parnellites and Mr. Gladstone.

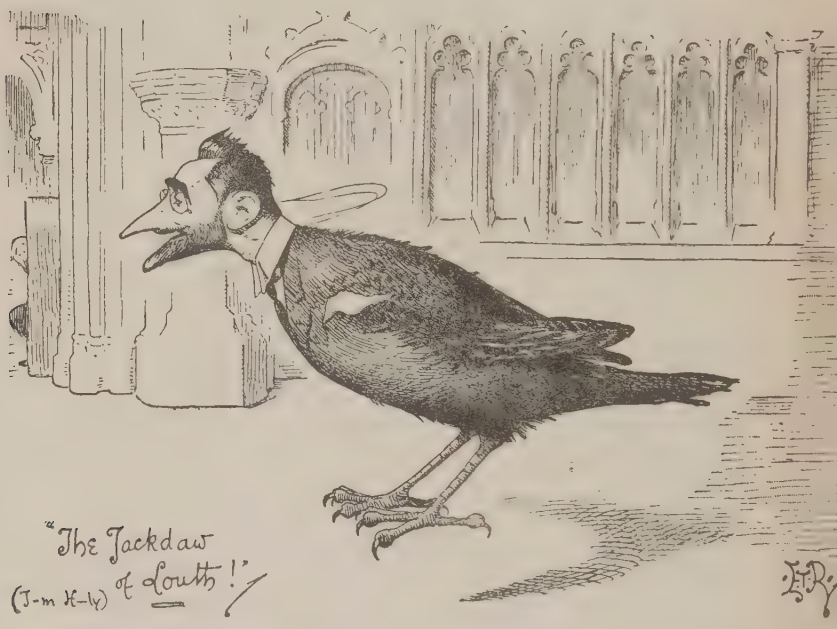
Mr. Healy was too modest to mention one other difficulty that in 1881 confronted Mr. Gladstone, feeling his way along the path of Irish Land reform first opened by him in 1870. Whilst the veteran statesman, whose memory he asserted—and it is time the assertion were made—will ever be fragrant in Ireland, was fighting with his back to the wall against landlordism in battle array with landlordism secretly plotting in his own camp, what were the Irish members doing? Mr. Healy knows, for with untamed spirit he took a hand in the cheerful business. They were harrying their deliverer on the flank, turning the House of Commons into a sort of Donnybrook Fair, defying the decencies of public life in effort to force Mr. Gladstone's hand to give them something more than it held. Thirty-three days the Bill was in Committee, and at that period the Parliamentary day went far into the night, the occasions being rare when dawn stealing through the side windows, paling the gaslights, did not discover something like a couple of hundred members wrestling over a word or a clause in the Land Bill.

The Transformation of Tim Healy.

A great deal has happened since then, especially to Mr. Tim Healy. In a personal note written on the spot during the passing of the Land Bill of 1881 he is described in an earlier diary as standing below the gangway, "an ill-dressed man with sullen manner, who audibly gnashed his teeth at the mace, and did not think it necessary to take his hands out of his pockets when addressing the Speaker." Even in those far-off days, when the deliberately planned conduct of Parnell's following made them as intolerable as the landlord system Mr. Balfour laments, Mr. Healy's honesty of purpose, true if truculent, was recognized. But the House did not care to hear him

speak, answering his snarls with angry shouting that egged him on to fresh vituperation.

Through nearly a quarter of a century he has whetted the razor of his wit on the strop of the House of Commons, and being of tempered steel he has got it now in fine workmanlike condition. It has come to pass that the *gamin* of the early Eighties, who, as he made cart-wheels down the floor of the House wished it were a



mud roadway productive of splashes, has reached the position of commanding influence in the Mother of Parliaments. There are only two other members—and they speak with the authority of Cabinet Ministers—who can fill the House as does Tim Healy.

His latest appearance on the scene testified in striking manner to this magic power. When, at four o'clock this afternoon, he interposed, the House was nearly

empty, the debate approaching a comatose state. An hour and a half of the sitting, which at its close did not leave more than sixty minutes at the disposal of the Minister in charge of the Bill, had been appropriated for delivery of two speeches the House would willingly have let die. Five minutes after Mr. Healy was on his legs the returning tide set in. It steadily flowed till presently his barbed shafts were flashing around the heads of a delighted audience that filled every bench and stood in a throng at the Bar. The sudden emptying of the House when a bore follows a brilliant speaker is easy to understand. What is mysterious is the swift filling of the Chamber when the converse is the case.

May 8. Mr. George Wyndham.

With his experience of the Irish Office, Mr. Forster, looking in any night this week when the Land Bill has been to the fore, would have gasped for breath (assuming breath were a necessary adjunct to his consciousness) as he watched his successor on the Treasury Bench, and heard what Irish members said about him. To those who remember the worried look on Chief Secretary Forster's face, the actual writhing as if in physical pain as he sat on the Treasury Bench, target for the venomous shafts of the Irish members; to those who watched George Trevelyan's hair grow white, as in succession he occupied the same post, Mr. Wyndham's relations with the Irish members suggest in their transformation the motive power of miracle.

It is the more pleasant to observe, since it is due to sheer capacity combined with chivalrous nature and implacable courtesy. Unparalleled popularity has not been purchased by truckling. Mr. Wyndham may from natural desire to please, wear the velvet glove. But there is, if occasion call for it, an implacably tight grip in the hand itself.

The circumstances of the hour, as we have all been reiterating in speeches spread over three mostly mournful days, are rarely propitious. The Conference with which the name of Lord Dunraven will, in the history of Ireland, ever be held in honour, was convened just in the nick of time. Exactly. But how if opportunity had not, as the French phrase it, been seized by the hair ? More than once in the sad record of the Irish Union has the Hour struck and the Man been lacking. Here with the Hour came the Man, and what a short two months ago seemed impossible is on the eve of achievement.

It will be a strange thing if in the task where veteran statesmen like Oliver Cromwell, Peel and Gladstone suffered defeat, a comparatively young Minister, in his very first attempt should achieve success. But apparently insuperable difficulty has a surprising way of yielding to rare combination of capacity.

May 15. A Momentous Decision.

Some day in some one's memoirs, the story of the surprise of Mr. Ritchie's first Budget, the abolition of the corn tax, will be told in detail. I hear some hints on the subject which suggest its interesting character. The idea was Mr. Ritchie's own, its submission to the Cabinet creating as much surprise as did the announcement in the House of Commons. Mr. Chamberlain, just home from South Africa, was dead against it, which, taken in conjunction with the natural indisposition of other members of the Cabinet to eat words emphatically spoken just a year ago, would seem to imply the hopelessness of the cause. Mr. Ritchie stuck to his point and carried it.

The view Mr. Chamberlain took, still holds, and in private conversation expresses with characteristic frankness, is that, rightly or wrongly, the corn tax reimposed had come to stay. Any political damage it had done to the Government in view of a general elec-

tion was irrevocable. To abolish it was admission of error not calculated to improve their position. As a matter of fact, it was demonstrated that the consumer did not appreciably suffer from the imposition of a shilling tax, whilst it conveniently widened the basis of national revenue and yielded the respectable sum of two and a-half millions. That Mr. Chamberlain was correct in his view of the tactical position is proved by the absence of anything like popular enthusiasm at the repeal of the shilling tax, whilst on the other hand there is active revolt within the Ministerial ranks, led by Mr. Chaplin and Mr. James Lowther.

"What am I to do now?"

Apart from these considerations of political strategy, the procedure places prominent members of the party in painful predicament. Mr. Arthur Balfour, with customary gay courage, has already faced his, explaining that the arguments he used last April to demonstrate the desirability of reimposing a corn tax are applicable to its abolition in the April following.

A statesman less light-hearted amuses his friends by the sombre gravity of his complaint. "What

am I to do now?" asks Lord Goschen, nervously wringing his hands. "Last year they got me to make a speech in the House of Lords, pledging my reputation as a Free-trader and my renown as a financier in demonstration of the assertion that the imposition of the shilling tax on corn was not only innoxious, but was the wisest and most beneficent thing that could be done for the people of England. How can I get up in the House of Lords twelve months later and defend its abolition as against the alternative of reduction of the duty on tea?"

CHAPTER XXI

OPENING THE FISCAL CAMPAIGN

Narrow Escape of Mr. Weir.—The Lasso for Motorists.—The Corn Duty.—A Critical Time.—Mr. Chamberlain's Position.—Cleavage.—The Duke of Devonshire.—An Historic Parallel.—Mr. George Wyndham.—"The Smiling Assassin."—Quick-change Scene.—Swearing in a New Peer.—The Dolour of Black Rod.—A Harassed Minister.—Mr. Balfour's Device.

May 21. Narrow Escape of Mr. Weir.

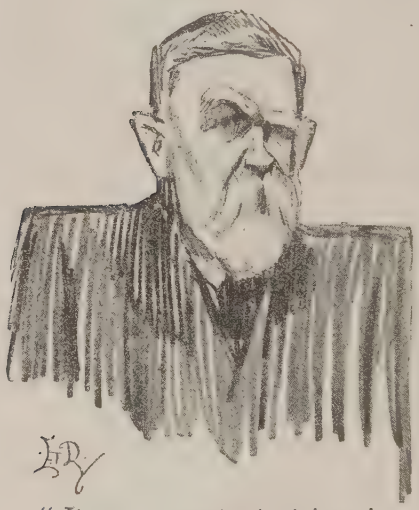
THERE is something characteristically simple and straightforward in Mr. Weir's suggestion of confronting what he, with perhaps pardonable asperity, calls "this motor-car curse." His attention was pointedly called to the matter by what during the war used to be called a regrettable incident. "At a quarter past four last Monday afternoon" Mr. Weir's footsteps were hastening towards the legislative Chamber when, crossing from Parliament Street to Palace Yard, a motor car came whizzing up. The watchful policeman uplifted warning hand. The chauffeur, possibly being a Frenchman and not understanding the language, sped along.

"It was a quarter past four in the afternoon," Mr. Weir repeated, in deep chest notes.

This precision as to time of the occurrence was unconsciously borrowed from the habit of scientific observers recording an earthquake or an eclipse. The car sped on, carrying with it the fate of more than

Cæsar. A false step, a moment's hesitation, and Mr. Weir's interrogative career would have closed. He would know everything, the shocked heavens looking down on a gory corpse stretched in the roadway by the gate of Palace Yard.

The House was wrought by the intense excitement born of the narrative into an almost hysterical state eventuating in a burst of boisterous laughter, which, misunderstood, shocked the sympathetic stranger in the Gallery. Mr. Weir knowing well it was merely a tribute to his graphic story, proceeded to discuss the motor-car question from the public point of view. Amid approving cheers he insisted that something must be done to check the activity of a class who in fresh flood of indignant eloquence he described as "these destructive wretches who have no more regard for human life than if they were flies"—meaning, of course, not that the occupants of the car, but the contingent victims of their reckless career, were flies. Means, he insisted, must be devised for "catching, upsetting, or smashing," the destructive wretches aforesaid.



"It was a quarter-past four in the afternoon."

Unlike some Parliamentary critics ready to pick a particular measure to pieces, but stopping short at

constructing an alternative, Mr. Weir threw out a practical suggestion. He had, he confided to the House, once visited the show of Buffalo Bill, and had observed with appreciation the skill with which the cowboys threw the lasso.

The Lasso for Motorists.

Here, ready to hand, was the cure for this new social evil. Members conjured up with pleasure the picture of the Home Secretary lurking about the entrance to Palace Yard, with swift, sure fling dropping the lasso over unsuspecting John Scott-Montagu, or surprised Charles Maclaren, as either came sweeping round the gate in his 50 h.-p. Panhard. In the quiet country lanes of Surrey there would be even fuller swing for the lasso, more saving of labour on the part of the police. Picture the Premier pounding through the leafy lanes at thirty miles an hour, pondering over the inner meaning and possible contingencies of the Colonial Secretary's deliverance on Fair Trade. A whirring sound in the air, the flash across the road of a snake-like form, and, pish ! the Premier, his identity unknown to the policeman, is landed like a twenty-pound salmon on Speyside.

Mr. Weir, really a kind-hearted man, positively gloated over his idea and the little tragedies it suggested. The Home Secretary, on the contrary, did not welcome it with uncontrolled enthusiasm. In respect of height, length of arm, and manly figure Mr. Akers-Douglas might, after brief training, equal, if not excel the average cowboy in the use of the lasso. But he treated the proposal with extreme coldness, rather meanly putting forward Mr. Walter Long as the Minister who should take the lasso in hand. Attempting to mollify the Member for Ross and Cromarty, he admitted that legislation is imperative, even went so far as to say a Bill is in preparation. But the matter is not, he insisted, within the purview of the Home Office,

pertaining rather to the department of his right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board.

There was nothing more to be said. Mr. Weir had cast his seed by the wayside. Responsibility rests with Ministers if the birds of the air have opportunity of eating it up.

June 9. **The Corn Duty.** Second Reading of Budget Bill moved. Mr. Chaplin submitted amendment for reduction of the Tea tax by twopence, with intent of forcing the Chancellor of the Exchequer to abandon his avowed intention of abolishing the shilling duty on corn.

He had a splendid audience, and delivered one of the best speeches that has brightened a long parliamentary career. Apart from the patriotic mission that compelled temporary emergence for welcome retirement, he had some little private scores to settle with a Cabinet from which not only had he been excluded—that was a small matter—but which had for some years survived his exclusion. His oration was marred by no vulgar slogging, no petty personal resentment. Rather was his manner that of the Jews in captivity as they sat down by the rivers of Babylon and wept when they remembered Zion. Many pleasant days had Mr. Chaplin spent with right honourable gentlemen on the Treasury Bench when they dwelt together in the Zion of Downing Street. Those memories and the bane of banishment had nothing to do with his present attitude. All the same they did not prevent him declaring, amidst a burst of hilarious cheering from the Opposition, that the Education Act of last year had done the Government more harm in the country than the imposition of a shilling tax on corn.

More damaging still was the speech of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach ; doubt existed as to the line he was prepared to take. Since debate opened he had been

taking notes from his corner seat behind the Treasury Bench. It could hardly be expected he would applaud the remission in May, 1903, of a tax he had created in May, 1902, on the distinct understanding that it was meant to be permanent. Nor as a Free Trader was he likely to wax enthusiastic in approval

"Taking Notes."

of Mr. Chamberlain's new financial crusade. The question was to what extent would he go in the direction of dissociating himself from former colleagues?

Soon the listening House, crowded from floor to topmost railing of the Strangers' Galleries, knew he was going all the way.

"The promulgation of this scheme of the use of our

tariff for purposes of retaliation and of colonial preference has already done one thing almost akin to a miracle. It has united the party opposite. It is dividing the ranks on this side of the House, and I venture to express my deep and conscientious conviction that if persisted in it will destroy the Unionist party."

A Critical Time.

These words, delivered with solemnity of tone and manner that added greatly to their effect, were listened to from the Treasury Bench in grim silence. For some Governments in analogous case they would have sounded the death knell. During the last two years Mr. Balfour has grown so accustomed to hearing similar warnings from faithful followers that, like the eel in certain disconcerting circumstances, he has grown accustomed to it. Formerly when revolt has broken forth from the Ministerial camp on War Office administration, wobblings round the Education Bill and the like, the Premier has had by his side an indomitable, resourceful comrade. As the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke Mr. Chamberlain was seated low down on the Treasury Bench, angrily, ostentatiously, proclaiming severance from his chief. There he sat with folded arms and countenance stonily set. No flicker of emotion crossed it even when Mr. Ritchie, producing from his pocket that scrap of paper which on the stage and off sometimes works strange influence in domestic circles, read the sentence passed by the Cabinet at their midday meeting, amounting to official throwing over of the Colonial Secretary.

If he liked, as Sir Michael Hicks-Beach put it, to blow off steam on the question of Protection versus Free Trade no one could say him nay.

"So far as the members of the Government who have spoken on this matter are concerned," Mr. Ritchie

read, " all that has been said has been that the question of preferential treatment of the Colonies should be discussed and inquired into."

This was bad enough, a distinct climbing down by the Premier, who must have been a party to the concoction of the message, if, indeed, he did not draft it. What had been said at Birmingham by the Colonial Secretary, repeated in the House of Commons with the expressed approval of the Prime Minister, was only their fun. As for Mr. Ritchie, he, " a convinced Free Trader," did not share the views of those who think that any practical means can be devised for overcoming the difficulties that environ the proposal, nor could he be a party to a policy which in his opinion would be detrimental both to the country and the Colonies.

Mr. Chamberlain's Position.

Those watching the scene, following its developments up to this critical moment, felt that this was a terrible facer for the Colonial Secretary. Either he or the Chancellor of the Exchequer must go ; and since Mr. Ritchie had been selected as the mouthpiece of the collective Cabinet, there was about his manner less than usual suggestive of the Paschal Lamb. But Mr. Chamberlain has not gone, and has evidently no intention of making a journey.

" Very well," say kind critics on the benches opposite, " that is his affair. If he likes to kiss the rod no one can say him nay. But he has suffered a personal humiliation from which he can never rcecover."

We shall see. Time and disposition towards reflection, unbiassed by personal prejudice or political animosity, will disclose the matter under quite another light. It is true that things have not gone exactly as the Colonial Secretary desired, or may have planned. The scene this afternoon, more especially with Mr. Ritchie playing the leading part, could not be pleasant to a proud spirit. But the substantial fruits of the

struggle are all with him. What he desired to do was to bring the question of preferential tariffs with the Colonies into the front rank of political problems of the day, with explicitly avowed intention of appealing to the country upon it at the General Election. That has been completely and irrevocably done. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach may say it is impossible; Mr. Ritchie may declare it impracticable; the Liberal ranks may close up prepared to fight it to the death. But there it is. It cannot be removed or evaded.

Whether the dissolution comes sooner or later the General Election will be fought on the question of preferential tariffs with the Colonies, combined with retaliation upon foreign nations disposed to take a hostile hand in the game. As to Mr. Chamberlain, having attained his immediate object he has *se recule*. But it is only *pour mieux sauter*.

July 1. Cleavage. A notable gathering of the rank and file of the Ministerial party took place to-night in the Grand Committee Room. Fifty-four Unionists assembled to declare fealty to Free Trade. Simply counting heads, this is a serious schism in a Ministerial party, even when it can still boast a majority of six score. But those familiar with the House of Commons recognize that this half hundred includes the fine flower of the Unionist Party. Its shrewdest heads, its best debaters, representatives of the most teeming constituencies, took part in founding the Free Food League.

In the situation at the present moment Mr. Chamberlain above all men cannot fail to see something ominous. Seventeen years ago there was, under his Presidency, another meeting of Dissentient Ministerialists, from whom was demanded, on their honour and conscience, decision on a matter involving the fate of a long-cherished Leader and the fortunes of a great

Party. They were known as Dissentient Liberals, and fighting Home Rule under Mr. Chamberlain's superb leadership, they drove Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal Party into a wilderness where the latter still stray. Life has its ironies, little and great. It will be odd indeed if the creation of a body of Dissentient Unionists, called into being by the same commanding personality that marshalled and led the Dissentient Liberals, should, in the near future, result in the destruction of the Party that triumphantly withstood Home Rule.

July 2. The Duke of Devonshire.

The advantage to any Government of the colleagueship of the Duke of Devonshire is inestimable. He is a tower of strength on account of his sagacity and long knowledge of public affairs. These are qualities shared by others. The Duke possesses in rare measure the confidence-compelling quality born of absolute, unimpeachable, almost rugged honesty. For the present generation he realizes the personality of Lord Althorp, leader of the Whig Opposition in the Commons seventy years ago, of whom Macaulay said, he combined the temper of Lord North with the principles of Romilly. There are between the two points of singularly close resemblance. Both were addicted to field sports, preferring the racecourse to Westminster. Neither was an Adonis in appearance or a Chesterfield in manners. Both detested speech-making. Both were constrained by a sense of duty to abandon their private pursuits, and take an active part in politics, being thrust by circumstances and friends into the position of Leader. Both, without stooping to the most innocent wile of popularity seeking, acquired high ascendency in the councils of the nation. In both characters relentless truth, impregnable integrity shone with lambent light.

The parallel between the Chancellor of the Exchequer

in Lord Grey's Ministry and the President of the Council in Mr. Balfour's, is carried further to the extent of their method and manner of addressing Parliament. To neither was given the tongue of the ready speaker. The other night, in one of the speeches on Mr. Chamberlain's new departure forced from his reluctant tongue, the Duke of Devonshire proposed to remind the House of Lords of four points in the inquiry into our fiscal system set forth by Mr. Balfour in reply to a question as to its scope and composition. Having more or less pellucidly summarized the first he could not remember the other three, nor could he find the memorandum on which he had written them out. This would have bothered some people. The Duke coughed and went on as if he had completed his avowed purpose, recital of the whole four. Undeterred by his failure, he next proposed to remind the House of three points submitted by Mr. Chamberlain when eagerly pursued by the inquisitive Opposition. Here matters were worse still. The Duke could not remember even the first. He coughed again, stolidly regarded the expectant groups opposite, and went on with another branch of his speech as if there were no hiatus.

An Historic Parallel. Seventy years ago Lord Althorp, being Chancellor of the Exchequer, had occasion to reply to certain criticisms advanced from benches opposite. In the seclusion of the Treasury he had gone into the matter, and with the assistance of the Permanent Secretary had tabulated figures controverting the critic. When in the course of his speech he reached the point at which this triumphant refutation would come in, he could not find the sheet of paper on which it was written. After leisurely turning his pockets inside out he said, "This morning I went thoroughly into this matter and found that the right hon. gentleman opposite is misinformed as to the facts.

I have not brought with me the paper on which I noted down the argument, but I assure the Committee it was so!"

That sufficed. A loud cheer taken up in all parts of the House accepted the simple word of Lord Althorp as equivalent to mathematical demonstration.

July 21. Mr. George Wyndham.

The Irish Land Purchase Bill left the House of Commons amid a chorus of applause for the Chief Secretary and of sanguine expectation for itself such as finds no parallel in Parliamentary history. Mr. George Wyndham, gone to Ireland in the train of the King, was not present to receive the homage paid to him. He will have full opportunity of reading it, and being, after all, a modest man, will perhaps be glad accident spared his blushes in the House. The Chief Secretary's career in Parliament has been a little curious, and is encouraging to newcomers. He entered upon a political career when he became private secretary to Mr. Arthur Balfour, at the time on the war path in Ireland. Thus early he entered the school in which he has this session achieved high distinction. He has been a member of the House of Commons for fifteen years. It is only during the last five that his Parliamentary and administrative abilities have received recognition.

There were periods towards the close of his ten years' apprenticeship when this most successful of Ministers began to despair. The House did not take kindly to his style of oratory. It was a little ornate, smelt vilely of the lamp, and was marred by certain mannerisms not wholly free from suspicion of practice before the cheval glass. In conversation with an old friend to whom he sometimes applied for counsel on his conduct in the House, George Wyndham once said the hardest blow he ever received came from the hand of his dearest friend, Arthur Balfour. It was

a sore disappointment to the Member for Dover that, when in 1895 Mr. Balfour became Leader of the House and First Lord of the Treasury, no place in the Ministry was found for him. It was whilst struggling under this disappointment Mr. Balfour one day, in friendly conversation, advised him to give himself up to the pursuit of literature. This meant, as Mr. Wyndham's sensitive mind perceived, that he was regarded as hopeless as a politician.

"The Smiling Assassin."

His chance came in 1898, when he was appointed to the War Office. There he speedily made his mark, and his transference three years later to the Irish Office was regarded with satisfaction on both sides of the House. The Irish members were effusive in their welcome to a lineal descendant of Lord Edward Fitzgerald. In a very short time the note of adulation was lost in the bitter denunciation of the "Smiling Assassin." That only proved that George Wyndham, though, like Arthur Balfour, most courteous in manner, had a will of his own. The "Smiling Assassin" has lived to find himself the object of adulation alike by Irish tenants and landlords, personal compliments from his chief in the House of Commons being warmly echoed from the Front Opposition Bench.

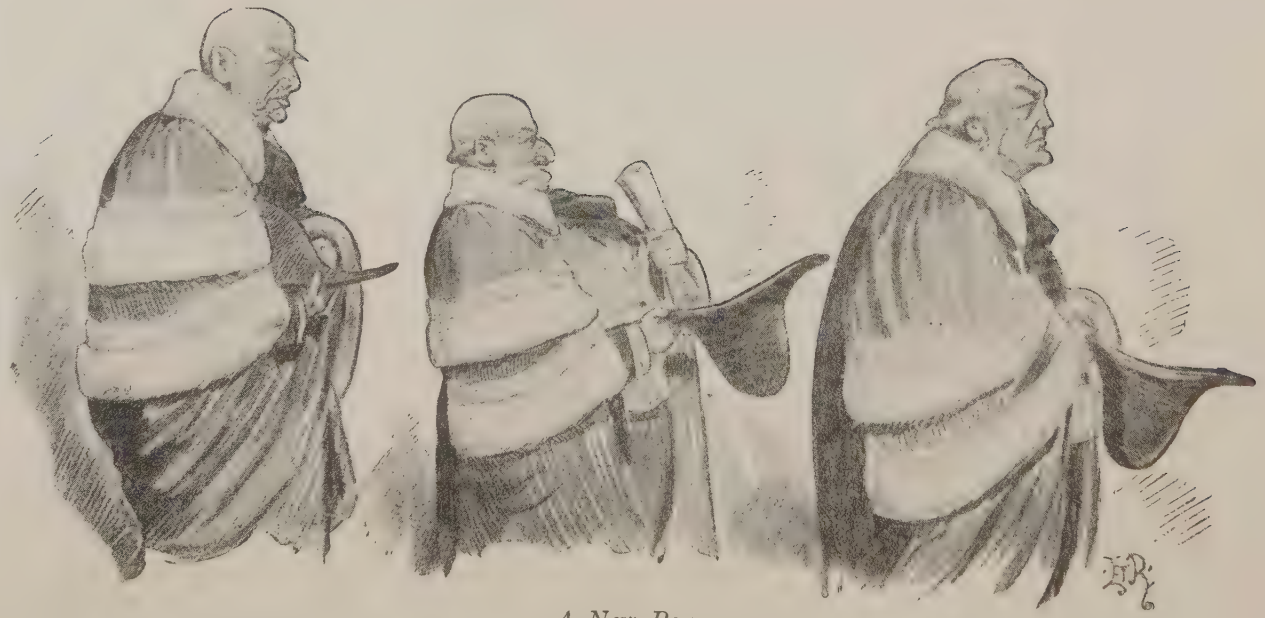
July 30. Quick-Change Scene.

To-night the House of Lords performed a part reminiscent of the humble tenement in which, long time all unknowing, Box and Cox dwelt together. In the morning the Chamber was devoted to the purposes of a Court of Appeal. The Lord Chancellor in wig and gown presided, supported by a Law Lord or two, faced by an array of learned counsel. *De jure* every Peer has the right to take part in the judicial proceedings of the House. *De facto*, if he be a layman, he is expected to ignore his privilege.

Up to the stroke of four o'clock this afternoon the House sat, exercising its appellant jurisdiction. Then the Lord Chancellor, the Law Lords and counsel streamed forth into the central lobby. Simultaneously there entered from behind the Throne a *posse* of what seemed to be cooks, the hue of their once white caps, aprons, and jackets suggesting the end of a long laborious season. With remarkable alacrity they seized certain small desks that had served the purpose of learned counsel and carried them forth. Mats temporarily laid on the floor were also clutched, the Clerks' table swept, and garnished with pens, ink, and copies of the Orders of the Day. Scarce was their task accomplished when the Lord Chancellor, who accomplished his exit from the passage by the Bar, made his *rentrée* by the passage behind the Throne.

Seating himself on the Woolsack he gazed expectantly adown the empty benches. The scene had changed, as had the business of the House. The Court of Appeal was, in the twinkling of a duster, changed into a legislative Assembly. Box, represented by the Court of Appeal, had gone forth by one door. Cox, in the guise of a legislative Assembly, entered by the other, and, as the old play concludes, "Box and Cox were both satisfied."

Aug. 6. Swearing in a New Peer. It was noted that, contrary to custom, the Lord Chancellor taking his seat on the Woolsack this afternoon placed on the top of his full-bottomed wig a black cap. This did not portend anything gruesome. Rather the reverse. As he sat silent, expectant, there emerged from below the Bar the head of a gorgeous procession. It was led by Black Rod, *en grand tenue*, with sword by his side, glittering spurs on his heels. Behind him came Norrey King at Arms in cloth of gold embroidered with the Royal Standard. Next strode the Earl Marshal, in the



A New Peer.

crimson and ermine robes of his dukedom. Then a group of three Peers, fully robed, the garment of the one in the centre glistening with newness.

At a funeral march Black Rod, apparently in fit of deepest depression, led the way towards the Woolsack. Halting a pace distant he and the Earl Marshal stood apart, whilst Norrey King at Arms presented to the Lord Chancellor the central figure, the cloaked Peer who, on bended knee, handed to the stately personage on the Woolsack a slip of parchment. Glancing over it, the Lord Chancellor, with studiously noncommittal air, returned it, and the procession retraced its steps to the Table, where stood the wigged and gowned Reading Clerk holding a parchment roll. Unfolding this he read, at a pace achieved only by long practice, what turned out to be the patent of nobility conferring upon Sir Edward Lawson, Baronet, the title of Baron Burnham of Hall Barn in the county of Bucks. Having got thoroughly into stride he next rattled off the contents of the strip of parchment upon which the Lord Chancellor, long trained to cautious habits, had looked askance. The gathering crowd of listeners caught a sonorous phrase bidding Lord Burnham attend and "join the peers, prelates, and nobles of this land."

The Dolour of Black Rod.

The peer in the new robes having taken the oath and signed the roll of Parliament, the procession re-formed, and Black Rod, more lugubrious than ever, made for the Barons' benches. These are situate below the gangway, by the bar on the Opposition side. The direct route skirted the front benches. But Black Rod, hugging his sorrow, was not going to part with it in undue haste connived at by short cuts. Turning to the right, he inconsequently led the procession all round the group of cross benches, and so back to the Barons' quarter. Dropping a silent tear when the goal was reached, Black Rod, accom-

panied by the Earl Marshal, took his stand by the front bench whilst Norrey King at Arms marshalled the three peers (one was Lord James of Hereford, thoroughly enjoying himself) to seats on the top row of the Barons' benches.

Here, after a moment's reflection, they put on their three-cornered hats, and relapsed into reverie. Norrey King at Arms calling their attention to the presence of the Lord Chancellor, they, with one accord, rose and, uplifting their hats, bowed low to his Highness, who graciously acknowledged the salute. Thrice obeisance was done, and the procession, re-formed as before, proceeded, unhastening, towards the doorway by the Throne.

It was pretty to see the altered manner of the Lord High Chancellor. When Lord Burnham was first presented to him his manner did not lack courtesy, but there was about it an air of frigidity chilling to a new Peer. Now everything was changed. Seven minutes ago Lord Burnham had, so to speak, been " a sort of " peer. His elevation had been mentioned in the papers, and the announcement remained uncontradicted. Till he had gone through the imposing ceremony here feebly, but faithfully, described, his status was not established. That done, the Lord Chancellor, with winning smile, held out the right hand of brotherhood to a peer of the realm.

This genial incident lifted the cloud of sorrow that weighed heavily on Black Rod. Relief was momentary. The greeting at the Woolsack concluded, he, with profound sigh, restarted the procession, and faded from sight in the gloom behind the doorway. Since Father Abraham led a procession of which his son Isaac was the principal figure, the sacrificial block the goal, nothing so depressing has been seen on earth as Black Rod bringing up a new Peer of Parliament to be sworn in.

Aug. 14. A Harassed Minister. The Prorogation accomplished to-day brings relief to many. None have earned rest in fuller measure than the Prime Minister. Apart from the ordinary labour of his office, overwhelming, incessant, the Session just closed has for Mr. Balfour been one of exceptional storm and stress. Midway in its course there suddenly burst over it the thunderclap of the Colonial Secretary's speech at Birmingham proclaiming crusade against Free Trade. That was admittedly a surprise to some of his colleagues in the Cabinet. It is reasonable to conceive that the First Minister would not volunteer expression of ecstatic delight in the prospect. Sufficient to the day are the cares it brings to a Prime Minister. To have added to his burden the load of an extraneous undertaking, which in far-reaching consequences equals Mr. Gladstone's excursion into the field of Home Rule, is not an arrangement he would voluntarily seek. But needs must when somebody drives.

The difficulties of the situation were increased by certain intricacies inherent to it. The Colonial Secretary's Birmingham speech was promptly followed by schism in the Cabinet. Exactly what passed behind the closed doors and the double windows of the room in Downing Street may not be known to the present generation. But a crowded House of Commons witnessed the dramatic scene that followed on the memorable meeting, and was enabled, with something more than common certainty, to conjecture what had taken place. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Ritchie) stood at the table and read from a scrap of paper the declaration that in what had been said the Colonial Secretary expressed his personal views, not those of the Cabinet as a whole, it was clear that the "big fight" had already begun. Whilst the Chancellor of the Exchequer, not usually a nervous man, fumbled for his eyeglasses and stumbled over the read-

ing of this mean-looking State paper, it is noted on an earlier page how the Colonial Secretary, abandoning his accustomed seat in friendly contiguity to the Prime Minister, found a place at the lower end of the Treasury Bench, among the Under-Secretaries. There, with folded arms, pale, sternly-set face, he sat and seemed not to listen whilst the Chamber was filled with jubilant cries of the Opposition, who fondly fancied they were witnessing the fall of the great Minister.

Mr. Balfour's Device.

Mr. Chamberlain is not a man hurriedly to accept defeat. He possesses in supreme degree the quality attributed to the Englishman of not knowing when he is beaten. At the outset he received a check. Influential colleagues in the Cabinet refused to be tied to his chariot wheels in this new, surprising dash against the sacred citadel of Free Trade. For a while break-up of the Cabinet seemed inevitable. In a moment of inspiration some one—it looks uncommonly like Mr. Balfour's work—suggested a *via media*.

"Don't let us quarrel," it was said. "Don't break up the Cabinet and let the common enemy in. Of course Chamberlain does not propose to take action during the existence of the present Parliament. He has his eye fixed on the electorate, and, between ourselves, may probably think, now the war cry is no longer available, it is indispensable we should run on a new broad track, obscuring some undesirable by-paths in our past career. When we and other Governments are in difficulty on a particular question raised in the House of Commons we propose a Royal Commission, which for a time shelves the difficulty, giving us time to look round. Let us have an Inquiry, which will suit our present purpose."

To this compromise the Free Traders in the Cabinet consented. It could do no harm, and would at least afford breathing space. It if was, indeed, Mr. Balfour's

device, he has paid high for its adoption. Day after day during the last two months of the session he has been pestered with urgent question about the Inquiry. He personally bore the brunt of the attack. Mr. Chamberlain almost ostentatiously withdrew from the Treasury Bench when the question of the hour was approached. Whenever the Opposition made attempt to broach the forbidden subject on side issues his seat was conspicuously empty. The Premier sat alone, his accustomed smiling equanimity changed to an aspect of petulant ill-temper. Early in the struggle he hit upon the expedient of declining to give information of any kind with respect to the Inquiry. Madame Humbert confronting the President of the Assize Court was not more monotonous or more angry in her refusal forthwith to disclose the whereabout of the millions that had eluded the custody of the safe.

"Wait for a few more days," she repeated, "and you will doubt us no longer."

"Wait till the result of the Inquiry is printed and circulated, and you will know all about it," was the Premier's fullest reply to reiterated interrogation. For the most part he sharply answered that he had nothing to say.

CALENDAR—SESSION 1903.

*Bills marked thus * are Government Bills.*

FEBRUARY.

17. *Tues.*—Parliament opened by the King in person.
H. M. Speech. Address. Debate thereon adjourned.

18. *Wed.*—H.M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Housing of the Working Classes, *Dr. Macnamara.* Division—For, 166. Against, 205. Debate adjourned.

19. *Thur.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Provision of work for the unemployed, *Mr. Keir Hardie.* Division—For, 161. Against, 201.
Amendment, London and Globe Finance Corporation, *Mr. Lambert.* Division—For, 115. Against 166. Debate adjourned.

20. *Fri.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Ministers of the Crown and Public Companies, *Mr. MacNeill.* Division—For, 109. Against, 147.
Amendment, Deer Forests (Scotland), *Mr. Weir.* Division—For, 98. Against, 158. Debate adjourned.

23. *Mon.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Land Forces (Organization), *Mr. Beckett.* Debate adjourned.

24. *Tues.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Land Forces (Organization), *Mr. Beckett.* Division—For, 145. Against, 261. Debate adjourned.

25. *Wed.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Land Conference Report (Ireland), *Mr. J. Redmond.* Withdrawn.
Amendment, Importation of Canadian Cattle, *Mr. Price.* Division—For, 38. Against, 190. Debate adjourned.

26. *Thur.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Debate thereon continued, and after further discussion agreed to.

27. *Fri.*—Solicitors Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.

MARCH.

2. *Mon.*—Supply: Civil Service (Supplementary) Estimates, 1902–3.
3. *Tues.*—Supply: Civil Service (Supplementary) Estimates, 1902–3.
4. *Wed.*—*Naval Forces Bill. First Reading.
*Licensing Bill. First Reading.
*Sale of Adulterated Butter Bill. First Reading.
*Employment of Children Bill. First Reading.
5. *Thur.*—Defence Committee. Motion, *Mr. Balfour.* Agreed to.
6. *Fri.*—Innkeepers' Liability Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 120. Against, 16.
Sale of Intoxicating liquors on Saturdays (Ireland) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 101. Against, 76.
9. *Mon.*—Supply: Army Estimates.
10. *Tues.*—Supply: Army Estimates.
11. *Wed.*—Supply: Army Estimates.
Army (Officers Removed). Motion, *Mr. Pirie.* Division—For, 57. Against, 185.
12. *Thur.*—*Licensing Acts Consolidation (Scotland) Bill. First Reading.
Supply: FIRST allotted day. Army Estimates, 1903–4.
13. *Fri.*—Church Discipline Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 190. Against, 139.
16. *Mon.*—Supply: Navy Estimates, 1903–4. Municipal Trading. Motion, *Mr. Balfour.* Debate adjourned.
17. *Tues.*—Supply: Civil Services (Excess), 1901–2.
18. *Wed.*—Supply: Navy Estimates, 1903–4.
19. *Thur.*—Supply. SECOND allotted day. Civil Services 1903–4 (Vote on Account).
20. *Fri.*—Rating of Machinery Bill. Second Reading.
23. *Mon.*—Supply: THIRD allotted day. Report.
*Army (Annual) Bill. First Reading.
*Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. First Reading.
24. *Tues.*—*Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. Second Reading.
*Employment of Children Bill. Second Reading.
25. *Wed.*—*Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. Committee.
*Irish Land Bill. First Reading.
26. *Thur.*—Supply: FOURTH allotted day.
*Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. Third Reading.

27. *Fri.*—Land Values Assessment Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 170. Against, 183.
30. *Mon.*—Supply: FIFTH allotted day. Navy Estimates, 1903–4.
31. *Tues.*—Supply: Navy Estimates, 1903–4.

APRIL.

1 *Wed.*—Army (Annual) Bill. Second Reading.
2. *Thur.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates, 1903–4.
*Ireland Development Grant Bill. First Reading.
3. *Fri.*—Merchant Shipping (Lighthouses) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 103. Against, 114.
Drunkenness and Registration of Clubs (Ireland) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 79. Against, 102.
6. *Mon.*—*Port of London Bill. First Reading.
*Licensing (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 121. Against, 52.
Licensing Acts Consolidation (Scotland) Bill. Second Reading.
7. *Tues.*—*London Education Bill. First Reading.
8. *Wed.*—Adjournment (Easter) Motion, *Mr. Balfour*. House adjourned until Tuesday, 21st April.
21. *Tues.*—Supply: SIXTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1903–4.
22. *Wed.*—Supply: Civil Services, etc., 1903–4.
23. *Thur.*—Ways and Means. Financial Statement, *Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*.
24. *Fri.*—Licensing Law (Compensation for Non-Renewal) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 266. Against, 133.
27. *Mon.*—Bethesda (Industrial Dispute). Motion, *Mr. Asquith*. Division—For, 182. Against, 316.
28. *Tues.*—*London Education Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
29. *Wed.*—*London Education Bill. Second Reading. Division on Amendment, *Mr. Sydney Buxton*—For, 300. Against, 163. Bill read second time and committed.
30. *Thur.*—Supply: SEVENTH allotted day. Army Estimates, 1903–4.

MAY.

1. *Fri.*—Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 164. Against, 94.
4. *Mon.*—*Irish Land Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
5. *Tues.*—*Irish Land Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
6. *Wed.*—Ways and Means. Transvaal Loan. Statement, *Mr. Chamberlain.*
Railway Servants. Motion, *Mr. Caldwell.* Division—For, 126. Against, 161.
7. *Thur.*—*Irish Land Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 443. Against, 26.
*South African Loan and War Contribution Bill. First Reading.
8. *Fri.*—Trade Disputes Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 226. Against, 246,
11. *Mon.*—Supply: EIGHTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1903–4.
12. *Tues.*—Ways and Means. Committee.
Church Discipline (No. 2) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 80. Against, 56.
13. *Wed.*—*Port of London Bill. Second Reading. Committed to a Joint Committee of Lords and Commons.
14. *Thur.*—Supply: NINTH allotted day. Navy Estimates, 1903–4.
15. *Fri.*—Coal Mines Regulation Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 144. Against, 183.
18. *Mon.*—*London Education Bill. Committee.
19. *Tues.*—*London Education Bill. Committee.
20. *Wed.*—*London Education Bill. Committee.
Congo Free State. Motion, *Mr. H. Samuel.*
21. *Thur.*—Supply. TENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1903–4.
22. *Fri.*—Aged Pensioners Bill. Second Reading.
25. *Mon.*—*London Education Bill. Committee.
26. *Tues.*—*London Education Bill. Committee. Bill Reported.
27. *Wed.*—*Education (Borrowing) Bill. Committee. Bill Reported.
28. *Thur.*—*Sugar Convention Bill. First Reading.
House adjourned until Monday, 8th June.

JUNE

8. *Mon.*—Supply: ELEVENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1903–4.
9. *Tues.*—*Finance Bill. Second Reading. Motion, Mr. *Chaplin*. Debate adjourned.
10. *Wed.*—Finance Bill. Second Reading. Motion, *Mr. *Chaplin*. Division—For, 28. Against, 424. Debate adjourned.
11. *Thur.*—Supply: TWELFTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1903–4.
12. *Fri.*—*Finance Bill. Second Reading. Adjourned Debate. Bill read a second time and committed.
15. *Mon.*—*Irish Land Bill. Committee.
16. *Tues.*—*Irish Land Bill. Committee.
17. *Wed.*—*Irish Land Bill. Committee.
18. *Thur.*—Supply: THIRTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1903–4.
19. *Fri.*—Elementary Education Amendment Bill. Third Reading.
22. *Mon.*—Finance Bill. Committee.
23. *Tues.*—*Finance Bill. Committee. Bill Reported.
24. *Wed.*—*Irish Land Bill. Committee.
*Finance Bill. Third Reading.
25. *Thur.*—Supply: FOURTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1903–4.
26. *Fri.*—County Courts Jurisdiction Extension Bill. Third Reading.
29. *Mon.*—*Irish Land Bill. Committee.
30. *Tues.*—*Irish Land Bill. Committee.

JULY.

1. *Wed.*—*Irish Land Bill. Committee.
2. *Thur.*—FIFTEENTH allotted day. Navy Estimates, 1903–4.
3. *Fri.*—*Employment of Children Bill, as amended by the Standing Committee, further considered.
6. *Mon.*—*Irish Land Bill. Committee.
*Naval Works Bill. First Reading.
7. *Tues.*—*Irish Land Bill. Committee.
8. *Wed.*—*Irish Land Bill. Committee.
9. *Thur.*—SIXTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1903–4.
10. *Fri.*—*Naval Works Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 164. Against, 73. Bill committed.

13. *Mon.*—*Licensing Acts (Scotland) Consolidation and Amendment Bill, as amended by the Standing Committee, considered.
14. *Tues.*—*London Education Bill, as amended, considered.
15. *Wed.*—*London Education Bill, as amended, further considered. Bill reported.
16. *Thur.*—SEVENTEENTH allotted day. Army Estimates, 1903–4.
17. *Fri.*—*Irish Land Bill, as amended, considered. Bill reported.
20. *Mon.*—EIGHTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1903–4.
*Patriotic Fund Bill. First Reading.
21. *Tues.*—*Irish Land Bill. Third Reading. Division—For, 317. Against, 20.
22. *Wed.*—*London Education Bill. Third Reading. Division—For, 228. Against, 118.
*Licensing Acts (Scotland) Consolidation and Amendment Bill. Third Reading.
23. *Thur.*—Supply: NINETEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1903–4.
24. *Fri.*—*Military Works Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 154. Against, 53. Bill reported.
27. *Mon.*—*Naval Works Bill. Committee.
28. *Tues.*—Business of the House (Government Business). Motion, *Mr. Balfour*. Division—For, 231. Against, 93.
*Sugar Convention Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
29. *Wed.*—*Sugar Convention Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 224. Against, 144.
30. *Thur.*—Supply: TWENTIETH allotted day. Civil Services, 1903–4.
31. *Fri.*—*Military Works Bill. Committee. Bill reported.

AUGUST.

3. *Mon.*—Supply: TWENTY-FIRST allotted day. Army Estimates, 1903–4.
Civil Services and Revenue Departments (Supplementary) Estimates, 1903–4.
4. *Tues.*—*Motor Cars Bill. Second Reading.
*Sugar Convention Bill. Committee.

5. *Wed.*—*Sugar Convention Bill. Committee. Bill Reported.
6. *Thur.*—Supply. TWENTY-SECOND allotted day. Civil Services, 1903–4.
*Sugar Convention Bill. Third Reading. Division—For, 119. Against, 57.
7. *Fri.*—*Motor Cars Bill. Committee. Bill Reported.
10. *Mon.*—*Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. First Reading.
11. *Tues.*—*Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Second Reading.
*Motor Cars Bill, as amended. Third Reading.
12. *Wed.*—*Irish Land Bill. Lords' Amendments considered.
*Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Committee.
13. *Thur.*—East India Revenue Accounts. Committee.
14. *Fri.*—Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Third Reading.
H. M. Speech. Prorogation.

SESSION 1904.

CHAPTER XXII

A RIVER PARTY

The King and His Speech.—Old Faces and New Places.—A Disrupted Party.—Mr. Chamberlain's Position.—Right Man in Right Place.—The Ruling Passion.—A Puzzle.—Aboriginal Protectionist.—Old Japan.—A Popular Premier.—"There is a Tide in the Affairs of all Men."—An Early Forecast.—"Our Old Nobility."—A Delicate Dilemma.—"Hands Up!"—Judge Advocate-General.—A Railway Outrage.

Feb. 2.
The King and His Speech.

It would be well if noble lords would—perhaps it is fairer to say, were enabled to—follow the example of His Majesty when addressing the House. There are singularly few, the number may be counted on the fingers of both hands, who can make themselves heard in the gilded chamber.

His Majesty, reading his speech to-day, was audible in the remotest corners of a building which habitually proves itself the sepulchre of uttered speech.

Old Faces and New Places.

The settlement of ex-Ministers in their new places was watched with keen interest in both Houses. In the Lords the Duke of Devonshire strolled in a few minutes after the proceedings opened, and dropped into the corner seat of the front bench below the gangway, where he found himself in the company of Lord Cross, a Minister much earlier retired from business.

Lord Balfour of Burleigh, the other seceding Cabinet

Minister having a seat in the House of Lords, was, after much searching, unexpectedly discovered seated among the bishops.

In the Commons, Mr. Chamberlain, whose arrival was greeted with a hearty cheer, smilingly made his way to the third bench below the gangway, where he sat in the lee of Mr. Henry Chaplin, on the corner seat.

Mr. Ritchie, who was also cheered, sat on the second bench, at whose corner seat Sir Christopher Trout Bartley keeps watch and ward.

Feb. 3. A Disrupted Party.

There is at present no sign of the Dissentient Unionists joining hands with Liberal Free Traders, any more than there was prospect immediately on the disruption of the Liberal party in 1886 of Mr. Chamberlain's sitting in Cabinet Council with Lord Salisbury, Mr. Balfour, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. Sufficient for the day is the fact that Mr. Chamberlain's action in raising the Protectionist flag over the Unionist citadel has been to create a Dissentient Unionist party which bears two ominous resemblances to quite another Dissentient party for whose creation he was, seventeen years ago, chiefly responsible. The number of Unionists who on the Free Trade question stand apart with Sir Michael Hicks-Beach against Mr. Balfour closely approaches the muster of Liberals who in 1886 followed Mr. Chamberlain against Mr. Gladstone. Again it is the pick and pith of the party who form the dissentient wing.

Pursuing further study of the analogy between the two most important political crises the country has known since the Great Disruption of Sir Robert Peel's time, we find in conviction on the points of Home Rule and Free Trade the same inflexibility. On some half dozen not unimportant political questions compromise, even conviction, is possible. About Home Rule or Free Trade there is no opportunity for haggling.

A man who believes that Protection and Home Rule are equally inimical to the interests of the Empire will sacrifice friendship and fortune, place and prospects, to resisting them. That is a peculiarity of the situation Mr. Balfour has doubtless taken into account in his look ahead. On the very threshold of his new departure he finds himself hampered in reconstructing his Ministry by the absolute aloofness of many desirable recruits. Unshaken in their loyalty to Unionist principles, they cannot hold truck with a Ministry that through the mouth and pen of its leader avows itself prepared to tamper with the sacred principles of Free Trade.

This state of things, indicated by the resignations of Mr. Ritchie, Lord George Hamilton, and Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and by the attitude of the phalanx of Free Trade Unionists in the House of Commons, is the reflex of opinion throughout the constituencies. Unionist electors who at the poll would have stuck to Mr. Balfour's Government even after the disclosures made in the evidence given before the War Commission, will not support candidates, otherwise unimpeachable, who show a disposition to dally with Protection, even when it is rechristened Retaliation.

Mr. Chamberlain's Position.

It is a pretty pass for a prosperous party to be suddenly brought to, a strange irony of fate that the hand that sets the heather afire should be the same that destroyed another party for which in former days it worked. As for Mr. Chamberlain himself, the exultation of political enemies at the alleged defeat marked by his resignation is a little foolish. From a purely personal point of view never throughout a striking public career has he displayed such masterpiece of management, such fertility of resource, such originality of plot as have marked

procedure culminating in the dramatic announcement of his resignation. On the threshold of the new session, he is a stronger man, a more potent influence in the direction of Imperial affairs, than he was whilst he still held the rank of Colonial Secretary and the position of Cabinet Minister. He has openly descended from the throne of Ministerial office. But it is to be the power behind the throne, more powerful than the Throne itself.

To begin with, he succeeded in driving out of the Cabinet the Minister whose stubborn insistence on abolishing the shilling duty on corn forced his hand on the question of Preferential Tariffs. Mr. Ritchie seemed to have won the day when on this point he successfully fought Mr. Chamberlain in Cabinet Council. Where is Mr. Ritchie to-day? Out of the Cabinet, his Ministerial career, if not finally closed, interrupted for an indefinite period. It is true Mr. Chamberlain is no longer in the Cabinet. But his withdrawal was voluntary, and is perhaps the most effective stroke in a cleverly devised, supremely played, game. In his letter announcing his resignation he not only clearly defined his position on the question of Free Trade, but drew the hapless Premier into writing a letter, simultaneously published, in which he finally committed himself to the principle of Retaliation.

That is as far as it is safe to go just now with the Duke of Devonshire looking on irresolute. For the present it will suffice, is indeed a great deal more than seemed possible, when at the outset of the campaign Mr. Balfour, challenged for expression of opinion, protested he had no settled conviction. The Cabinet thus pledged to enter on the broad highway of Protection by the avenue modestly labelled Retaliation, Mr. Chamberlain, unmuzzled, unhampered by the doubts of halting colleagues, goes forth to clear the way for advance to the further end.

Meanwhile he nominates Lord Milner as his successor at the Colonial Office, and is represented in the Cabinet by his son in the surprising position of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

If this is defeat there are some kings and statesmen who would like to share the adversity.

Feb. 8. Right Man in Right Place. In the absence of the Leader of the House, confined to his room by illness, we have the Home Secretary performing his statutory duties. The selection made among his colleagues reflects credit on Mr. Balfour's discernment. Mr. Akers Douglas is a model man for the post at the present juncture. Some men, even some Ministers, assuming ignorance with respect to an awkward topic, destroy the effect by looking as if they knew all about it. With fine art, the greater because it is concealed, the Home Secretary, questioned by unreasonable members opposite, absolutely looks as if he knew nothing on the particular subject submitted, or indeed on any other.

When Mr. Gladstone was in analogous difficulty it was his genial habit to make reply of the proportions of an ordinary speech, leaving his interlocutor at the end of ten minutes in a state of hopeless bewilderment. Mr. Balfour, questioned as to his views on Fiscal Reform, sometimes lost, or affected to lose, his temper. Mr. Akers Douglas, surveying inquisitive members opposite as if they were a field of buttercups and daisies, with childlike blandness says he doesn't know. And there the matter ends.

Feb. 10. The Ruling Passion. The Attorney-General for Ireland has brought over with him an addition to his stock of good stories. It was originally in possession of Sir John Robinson, Vice-President of the Irish Local Government Board, but loses nothing in the telling by Mr. Atkinson.

A member of the Irish constabulary was posted on a road leading to Dublin, with instructions to watch motor cars returning from a suburban parade and take the number of any exceeding statutory speed. Presently one bowled along at twenty miles an hour.

"Um!" said the policeman, regarding it stolidly. Next came one doing its forty miles an hour.

"Ah!" exclaimed the custodian of public safety, his eyes brightening.

Last of all came one nearing a pace of a mile a minute.

"Begorra!" said Pat, slapping his thigh in ecstasy, "that's the best of the lot."

Thus did the instincts of the sportsman overcome the discipline of the policeman.

Feb. 12. A Puzzle. In some respects the fiscal reform debate which has occupied the House of Commons during the week is unparalleled. There were two men, and only two, whose views on the situation the House and the country earnestly desired to ascertain. Both have been absent, Mr. Balfour through illness, Mr. Chamberlain in mourning for "the truest and most unselfish of friends" (Powell Williams). For the rest, members have during the Recess said what they had to say, and, with few exceptions, their personality is not so attractive as to make repetition desirable.

Prevailing dullness has been varied by a new situation. Mr. Gerald Balfour, avowedly speaking on behalf of the Government, threw over Mr. Chamberlain. As Mr. Ritchie said in the hearing of the President of the Board of Trade, who made no sign of dissent, the taxation of food is gone, preferential tariffs have gone, only retaliation remains. Ministerialists are hopelessly puzzled. If, as appears probable, Mr. Gerald Balfour was saying what his brother would have

declared had he stood at the table, further disruption of the Ministry is inevitable. It is hard to see how, with their chief thus repudiated, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Mr. Walter Long, and others can remain.

Aboriginal Protectionist.

The only man on the Ministerial side who can regard the situation with complacency is Mr. Chaplin. This he does with an effusiveness that illumines, as with a glow of sunlight, the quarter of the House where he sits. For thirty-five years his has been the voice of one in the wilderness crying aloud for a tax on corn. He has been laughed at, even buffeted; but has kept serenely on his way, hoping against hope. His final triumph is glorified by consideration of the agency that has made it possible.

> Who but must laugh if such a man there be,
> Who would not weep if Atticus were he?

Certainly not Mr. Chaplin. Tears are far from his eyes. Laughter is on his lips. In 1885, when Mr. Chamberlain was going about the country bearing the red flag of another Unauthorized Programme, his name was anathema to the then Member for Mid-Lincolnshire. Mr. Chaplin's constitutional belief in Divine providence was almost shaken by contemplation of Mr. Chamberlain's taking frequent railway journeys in pursuance of his mission and nothing happening in tunnels, on bridges, or in approaches to crowded stations. To-day when he mentions his right hon. friend's name his voice grows tremulous with reverential regard. Into his eyes steals soft wonder that such supreme excellence can exist on a mere planet.

This is the tribute of a generous nature. Mr. Chamberlain is a late comer to the work of the vineyard. Mr. Chaplin has toiled in it from early manhood. In these days, when constancy is the rarest attribute of political life, his example is the more shining.

Feb. 16. Old Japan.

Among members of the House of Commons Sir Charles Cayzer has had quite an exceptional experience of Japan. Forty-four years ago he, a youth serving his time on board a sailing ship, put in at Yokohama. Two years earlier Lord Elgin, visiting Japan, taking with him a steamer by way of a new toy for the Emperor, obtained the treaty of Yedo (now Tokyo), opening certain ports of Japan to British commerce.

The ship on which Sir Charles worked was one of the first to avail itself of the privilege. He found it sharply restricted. While the Emperor was inclined to make friends with Western Powers, his people would have nothing to do with "foreign devils," except to slice them with two-handed swords. A year later the British Embassy at Yedo was attacked and some of its inmates were wounded.

Walking about the streets of Yokohama, and subsequently Nagasaki, Sir Charles quite commonly saw men with their fingers chopped off, some with the hand severed at the wrist, at least one with his mouth sewn up.

The man, he learned, was convicted of perjury, and this was the effective manner that recommended itself to the Japanese judiciary of preventing his sinning again. Such were the ways of barbaric Japan, which, sedulously following Western ideas and customs, has in the intervening years blossomed into a civilized nation, now ranking among the Great Powers.

Feb. 25. A Popular Premier.

After four weeks' absence following on an attack of influenza, the Prime Minister this afternoon returned to the House. The heartiness and universality of his reception made it one of those pleasant little episodes that soothe the acerbities of political strife. It was well enough, a matter of course, that the Unionists should cheer their captain. Significance lay in the fact that the applause

was not less hearty above and below the gangway on the Opposition side. It is in truth a long time since a leader of the House of Commons reached the pitch of personal popularity to-day enjoyed by Mr. Balfour. In much the same degree the House liked Palmerston and Disraeli, wishing them well in enjoyment of their late-earned honour. Mr. Gladstone commanded the admiration, sometimes the loyalty, of his own party. But he never won over the Opposition, even to the point of decent assumption of delight in his presence. Mr. W. H. Smith was in his quiet, unassuming way admirable as a leader, popular as a man. But he never evoked personal enthusiasm. Mr. Balfour possesses in large degree the indefinable quality that works that end. He has the true House of Commons instinct, and has carefully trained it during the eight years he has sat by the brass-bound box guarded by the shades of Peel, Russell, Palmerston, Disraeli, and Gladstone.

"There is a tide in the affairs of all men."

It is strange to think that it was by accident his steps were directed into the pathway he has trodden with unsurpassed success. Up to his twenty-fifth year he had no hankering after Parliamentary life, nor any leaning towards active politics. It was the personal intervention of his uncle, the Marquis of Salisbury, which gave him the impulse languidly admitted. At the General Election of 1874 the pocket borough of Hertford lacked a candidate, and Lord Salisbury urged his sister's son to step into the breach. Mr. Balfour had his philosophic doubts as to the utility of the enterprise. Yielding to the authority of the head of his house he stood, and was of course returned. He made no mark in the Parliament led by Disraeli. One does not remember that he took part in any debate. His attendance was fitful, his attitude, mental and physical, languid.

It was the birth of the Fourth Party in the opening days of the memorable parliament that sat at Westminster in 1880–5 that stirred his pulse. But though he sat below the gangway in the company of Lord Randolph Churchill and his party, composed of Drummond Wolff and John Gorst, he did not display the unbroken regularity of attendance that distinguished those patriots. He was not by nature disposed for that trench work Lord Rosebery shrewdly recognizes as indispensable to political success, and to the practice of which he earnestly invites others. Nevertheless, he spoke occasionally and began to attract some attention.

An Early Forecast. Here is a thumb-nail sketch which appeared nearly twenty-four years ago in an earlier Volume of this Diary, interesting chiefly, perhaps, as being the first public recognition in journalism of the Premier of to-day. It bears date August 20, 1880. "The Member for Hertford is one of the most interesting young men in the House. He is not a good speaker, but he is endowed with the rich gift of conveying the impression that presently he will be a successful parliamentary debater, and that in the meantime it is well he should practise. He is a pleasing specimen of the highest form of the culture and good breeding which stand to the credit of Cambridge University. He is not without desire to say hard things of the adversary opposite, and sometimes yields to the temptation. But it is ever done with such sweet and gentle grace, is smoothed over by such earnest protestations of innocent intention, that the adversary rather likes it than otherwise."

This forecast has been strikingly justified. By long and constant practice Mr. Balfour has become one of the most habile debaters in the House. He never attempts to soar to the majestic heights of Gladstone's

eloquence, nor does he equal Mr. Chamberlain in the gift of incisive speech. But he has always at hand the right phrase to express, with *nuance* most appropriate to the circumstances of the moment, what it is convenient and desirable a Minister should say. Naturally short-tempered, aflame with impatience of mediocrity, he has with severe discipline obtained perfect command over himself when addressing the House. It is possible that in the course of debate he may find relief in *sotto voce* comments addressed to colleagues seated on either side of him on the Treasury Bench. But that is another story. When on his legs he can, upon occasion, singe a suitable enemy with burning scorn, shrivel him up in a flame of splendid indignation. As a rule he is the pink of courtesy, ready to attribute the best motives to everybody, even to an Irish Nationalist member.

March 7. "Our Old Nobility."

The Marquis of Granby tells me that no one in the thick of the fight regards the controversy around fiscal reform with keener interest than his venerable father. If it were not for the difficulty he finds in making himself heard in the House of Lords he would have taken part in the two nights' debate raised last week by Lord Crewe.

It is sixty-five years since the Duke of Rutland, then Lord John Manners, entered the House of Commons as Member for Newark, sharing the representation of the borough with Mr. Gladstone. To hear talk about a Corn Tax and other protective duties is to renew memories of his young manhood. In the early forties he worked in close companionship with Disraeli and Lord George Bentinck in their determined opposition to Peel's Free Trade policy. In his eighty-fifth year the Duke is, his son says, in really vigorous health. He rides every day, walks for at least a couple of miles, and conducts his own correspondence, disdaining the assistance of a secretary.

Now that Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Villiers are dead there is no one left who has behind him such far-reaching personal experience of public life as the picturesque-looking Duke of Rutland.

March 9. A Delicate Dilemma. To-night the Government were saved from defeat only by abject capitulation, involving the sacrifice of an honest, loyal supporter put up to play a carefully-considered game. The Opposition had tabled a motion declaring dead against Mr. Chamberlain's programme of fiscal reform. Mr. Balfour is, as he is accustomed with increasing persistence and particularity to affirm, no supporter of Mr. Chamberlain's scheme involving preferential tariffs and taxation of food. That being so, he might have supported the Resolution. To so do would be to cause revolt among the Chamberlainite section of his party. To oppose it would lead to the secession of the Free Fooders in the Ministerial ranks. Happy thought! Frame an amendment that will soothe the prejudices of the Free Fooders and send the Ministerialists a united family into the division lobby.

This was done with the expenditure of much thought, the exercise of trained skill. Mr. Wharton, a respectable and respected Ministerialist of amiable views on general policy, was put up to move an amendment approving "the explicit declaration of His Majesty's Ministers that their policy of fiscal reform includes neither a general system of protection nor of preference based on the taxation of food."

This was well designed to accomplish its original purpose of placating the Free Fooders. It was a great victory for them. Since results of the bye-elections accumulated Ministers under Mr. Balfour's lead have lost no opportunity of dissociating themselves from Mr. Chamberlain. But there is a great difference between voting on a motion and uttering what may

be only a pious opinion. To have nailed Mr. Wharton's amendment to the Ministerial mast would have meant irrevocable rupture with Mr. Chamberlain.

"Hands Up!"

This obvious fact had immediate consequences. The Free Fooders in the Ministerial camp were won over. On the other hand, the Chamberlainites raised the flag of rebellion. They met, a hundred strong, and conveyed to the Premier stern intimation that if the Wharton amendment were persisted in they would vote against the Government. The penalty of obduracy would have been defeat. Had the Chamberlainites merely abstained from voting the Government, as the issue showed, would have been placed in a minority. Mr. Balfour capitulated.

At the very last moment the amendment was withdrawn. Nevertheless the Government majority fell to forty-six. The Free Fooders, in their turn affronted, as some of them put it betrayed, either abstained from the division or voted against Ministers.

March 13. Judge Advocate-General.

Among minor reforms under contemplation in connexion with the War Office is the reinstatement of the office of Judge Advocate-General on a parliamentary basis.

The office is a very ancient one, and carries with it by usage, if not by right, the dignity of Privy Councillor. While Sir George Osborne Morgan held it he was accustomed to extol its importance to the State as second only to that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer or the First Lord of the Treasury.

According to ancient privilege, while other Ministers of the Crown desiring to have audience of the Sovereign beg the favour, the Judge Advocate-General has the entrée to the royal presence without that preliminary.

A Railway Outrage.

It was while Sir George Osborne Morgan was wrestling with the duties and difficulties of the office of Judge Advocate-General that he met

with a painful railway accident. In anticipation of holiday making he treated himself to a first-class new portmanteau, on which he boldly inscribed his initials, G. O. M.

On arriving at his country seat near Wrexham, he discovered that the lettering had been savagely hacked out of recognition, to the permanent detriment of his new portmanteau.

It was during the height of popular resentment against Mr. Gladstone, arising in connexion with the death of Gordon. Some patriot, observing initials shared equally by the Grand Old Man, was lashed into fury, and, inconsequentially but effectively, ruined the property of the Judge Advocate-General.

CHAPTER XXIII

DEFEAT OF THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. Balfour in the Dock.—Woes of the Whip.—Defeat of the Government.—A Unionist Free Fooder.—Mr. McNeill Shocked.—Reprisals on the Premier.—A Parliamentary Policeman.—The Claimant.

March 14. Mr. Balfour in the Dock.

The Premier's speech to-night was gay in its courage, brilliant in its execution. Publicly accused of jockeying his colleagues, he, slighting the indictment, after a fashion not unfamiliar in the Law Courts, devoted the lengthier portion of his reply to abusing the plaintiff's attorney. The incident recalls one in the college life of Lord Randolph Churchill that still lingers in the halls of Oxford. Charged with some indiscretion the youth was summoned to an interview with the Master. It was a bitterly cold day. At its opening the Master was observed standing with his back to the fireplace with coat tails slung over his arm, enjoying the genial heat, the peccant pupil in penitential attitude at the bleaker end of the room. A quarter of an hour later found Lord Randolph standing before the fire with coat tails upturned, addressing the humble Master afar off in the cold.

So to-night Mr. Balfour, being (in a parliamentary sense) placed in the dock, lightly leaped over the barrier, stood by the bench, and hammered at everybody all round.

It was brilliant, but it was not business. The House of Commons, keenly jealous of the honour of public men, would have preferred a plain statement, explaining away the damaging narratives of Mr. Ritchie, Lord George Hamilton, and the Duke of Devonshire.

The case is one in which certain leading facts are undisputed. They are, indeed, jointly testified to by the Premier and his ex-colleagues. On September 9 of last year the Colonial Secretary wrote to the Prime Minister resigning office. On the Monday following a Cabinet Council was held, the Premier keeping to himself the secret of the momentous step taken by Mr. Chamberlain. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for India, acknowledging Mr. Chamberlain's personal predominance on the fiscal question, all unknowing that he had thrown up Ministerial office, resigned. On the evening of September 16 the Duke of Devonshire, remaining after a second Cabinet Council for private consultation with the Premier, was shown Mr. Chamberlain's letter. In the altered circumstances—withheld from the knowledge of Mr. Ritchie and Lord George Hamilton—he consented not to press resignation tendered, as the other two had been, under the impression that the Colonial Secretary was still a Minister.

This is the plain, unvarnished, uncontroverted tale Mr. Balfour was to-night challenged to explain. How did he do it ? Well, to tell the truth, he left it undone. He did not contradict any one of the statements of facts here set forth. He just ignored them.

March 16. Woes of the Whip.

With instinctive dramatic effect, with unconscious mimetic skill, the Ministerial Whip, crossing the Lobby, going and returning to his room, manages to present a striking embodiment of the current mood of the Ministerial party. The effect is gained by his furrowed brow, his look of almost dazed preoccupation, his springless step and, when he speaks, his hollow voice. Time was when he spanned the Lobby with blithe step, happy in the assurance that a majority of a hundred and thirty awaited his call. Like Robin Hood in the glades of Sherwood Forest he

had but to wind his horn (represented by a five-lined Whip), and his merry men sprang up ready to bang C.-B.

The Ministerial Whip.

Not prone to superstition, as ready to shoot an albatross as a wild duck, Acland-Hood cherishes at the bottom of his heart conviction that at the beginning of this fateful Session he did an uncanny thing. Since whipping-in was elaborated to the scale of a fine art it has been the custom in times of emergency to send out a summons five times underlined. "A five-lined Whip" has for generations been a familiar phrase in parliamentary parlance. On the eve of the present Session an alluring thought flashed across Sir Alexander's mind. Things weren't going well with the national exchequer. The colossal cost of the war, coming on the top of doles to the clergy, relief to the landlords, and subsidies to denominational schools, had run national expenditure to a hitherto unrecorded height. Once more was heard from Opposition benches the old battle cry Retrenchment. With the prospect of increased taxation in the new Budget, the tumult was likely to increase. It was not much that could be done in the matter of the modest expenses of the Whip's office. But example counted high.

So Sir Alexander resolved to abolish the five-lined Whip that had played its part in parliamentary warfare before and since the days of Catholic Emancipation. If the matter were clearly understood a three-lined Whip would be as efficacious as one running to the extravagance of five. The cost of printing would be reduced by some pence every day the House sat, and, if you only stick at it, pence soon run into pounds.

So the five-lined Whip was abolished, and through this Session the superlative of command to Ministerialists to be at hand to repel boarders is marked by three lines.

Defeat of the Government.

We know how it has worked, or, to be precise, how yesterday it failed to work. Delivered in the early morning with special request to Ministerialists to be in their place not later than half-past two, the bulk of the Party strolled in at various hours in the later afternoon to learn that the Government had been defeated by a majority of eleven.

Happily the party is led by a statesman whom nothing surprises, unless it be the persistent curiosity of gentlemen opposite with respect to stray documents and the particulars of conversations preceding disruption in the Cabinet. The portentous epoch-making defeat of Mr Gladstone in 1885 found that statesman seated on the Treasury Bench, completing his nightly letter to the Queen, which, after his habit of using up spare moments, he carried out with him into the Division Lobby, going on writing whilst his followers trooped to the wicket as Madame Defarge went on knitting at the foot of the guillotine. The figures announced, the Premier paused to add to his budget the news that in a House of 516 Members Her Majesty's Government had been defeated by a majority of twelve. Then he rose and quietly moved the

adjournment as preliminary to consultation with his colleagues resulting in resignation.

Ten years later, on another June night, Lord Rosebery's Government, being defeated by a majority of seven snatched in a snap division, Progress was at once reported, the House adjourned, and when it reassembled Lord Rosebery in one House, Sir William Harcourt in the other, announced that the resignation of the Government had been proffered and accepted.

These commonplace, almost vulgar proceedings did not recommend themselves to Mr. Balfour's adoption in circumstances closely analogous to those attendant on the carrying of the cordite amendment. Resign? Ridiculous. Report progress? Preposterous. It was quite true that a Government which still boasted a normal majority of over a hundred found itself in a minority. But the only consequence plain to the Premier's mind was that, *more Hibernico*, the Irish Members, ever clamouring against the alleged parsimony of the predominant partner, had voluntarily, on their own initiative, by their own action, reduced their Education subsidy by the sum of £100. Let them now get on with business and not idly chatter about so inconsiderable a thing as defeat of the Government.

That is all very well for a man of philosophic mind like the Premier. For the Party Whip the disaster in the Division Lobby is quite another thing. For him it means the breaking of bonds of discipline inevitably leading to the disintegration of the party. If Ministerialists deliberately ignore the most urgent form of Whip, albeit only three-lined, it is time to pack up at Downing Street.

March 21. A Unionist Free Fooder. There was something almost beatific in the expression on Major Seely's countenance as he stood below the gangway waiting to say a few words in debate on C.-B.'s vote of censure.

His uprising was the signal for an outburst of resentment on the Ministerial benches rarely exceeded in savagery. Members ordinarily of respectable demeanour, fathers of families, some even churchwardens, with flushed cheeks roared for a division. In ordinary times Sir Trout Bartley is the very pink of respectability. There is about his bearing a certain subtle, indescribable, penny-bank placidity combined with solidity indicative of prosperity, that allures depositors. At sight of the Member for the Isle of Wight standing just before him awaiting a hearing, Sir Trout suddenly grew as agitated as the salmon at the bottom of a deep pool when there is forced on its attention the designs of a gentleman on the bank furnished with rod and line.

When Mr. Winston Churchill interposed with complaint that he could not hear what his honourable friend was saying "owing to vulgar clamour among the Conservative party," Sir Trout jabbing—if the word be parliamentary, and in connexion with this scene it may pass—jabbing with his hat in the direction of the Member for Oldham remarked, "The vulgarest expression came from this hon. Member." Never since hats were made was one invested with such scorn and virtuous indignation as thrilled round the rim of Sir Trout's topper extended at arm's length.

Meanwhile, Major Seely looked on with expression of benevolent neutrality as if it were some one else his hon. friends were yelling at. A passive resister he, they might take his watch and eke his boots. But he meant to say a few words and would wait till the clamour subsided in order to find an opening. In a comparative lull he was understood to say something about resigning his seat. Curiosity momentarily overcoming anger the turbulent body below the gangway subsided long enough to hear the news that the Major had communicated to his constituents his intention of resigning his seat.

The lull was only temporary. The Speaker having uttered warning remonstrance against the continuous cry for a division, Members hit upon the expedient of entering into conversation, which, regardless of privacy, was conducted at the top of their voice. Nothing ruffled Major Seely. He really thought that, this probably being the last time he would have the opportunity of addressing them, they might hear him. Since they wouldn't he, growing more and more spiritual in facial expression, remained on his legs, getting a word in here and there. At last, turning round to hon. gentlemen behind with outstretched hand, a gesture appropriate to a concluding sentence which, inaudible like most that had gone before, was probably a benediction, he resumed his seat.

Mr. McNeill Shocked.

In contrast with this demeanour, reminiscent of an early martyr at the stake, was the conduct of Mr. Swift MacNeill. Peculiarly abhorrent to him is any outbreak of disorderly conduct in the House of Commons. The effect upon him of that just now in full blast was painful to witness. Had the bench on which he sat been charged with a battery of electricity he could not have bounded with more vigour. Now and then, high above the chorus maintained with full power of lung by half a hundred gentlemen opposite, sounded his familiar voice, tendering counsel or administering rebuke. His shirt front, apparently terrified out of its life, projected from the confinement of his waistcoat in alarming fashion. No one quite knew at what stage development of this movement might end. Fortunately before matters grew embarrassing in this respect, Major Seely, content with his patient sufferance of martyrdom, and beginning to feel a little hoarse, resumed his seat.

Reprisals on the Premier.

Here it might seem the tumult would cease and the more ordinary fashion of

parliamentary debate be resumed. What passed proved merely the prelude to fresh outbreak. The Premier, rising shortly after eleven o'clock with intent to wind up the debate, found himself the object of angry demonstration. As a rule, so potent is his personal charm that in whatever mood the House may find itself, it always bends a pleased ear to his utterance. Now, whenever he opened his mouth to speak a roar of "'Vide! 'Vide! 'Vide!" filled the chamber. The electric battery on the second bench below the gangway on the Opposition side being freshly charged, Mr. Swift MacNeill began to bound to heights exceeding his earlier record.

"Why didn't you give Seely a hearing?" he shouted, shaking his fist at the Premier, further emphasizing the remark by three bounds of exceptional height, executed at superlative velocity.

Mr. Balfour's sweet reasonableness, which the other night sustained him through a defeat in the division lobby, now stood him in good stead. He did not fume, or fret, or appeal to the Speaker for protection. He did not emulate the look of saintly reproach which from time to time Major Seely turned upon his tormentors. It was with amused regard he surveyed the tumultuous scene across the floor of the House. For Mr. Swift MacNeill's saltatory performance he reserved a glance of friendly, almost admiring, interest, as one in the boxes regards exceptional effort on the part of a looper of the loop. There must be an end to it some time. Something, whether breeches or bench who should say, must presently give way, and then perhaps the Prime Minister might be permitted to contribute a few remarks to debate.

In the end Mr. Balfour's polite imperturbability prevailed, and for something like half an hour he had a fair hearing. The episode is interesting, among other things, as showing how one touch of nature makes the

world kin. The gentlemen of England are, after all, under similar provocation, uncommonly like the Irish members whom they are accustomed to hold up to reprobation for unparliamentary manners. Scratch Sir Trout Bartley and you will find Swift MacNeill. The discovery is startling, at first sight shocking. But there is the fact, and it should make us tolerant of each other in this and in other matters.

March 23. A Parliamentary Policeman. Inspector Denning, whose death is just announced, was in his way a notable Parliamentary personage. For nearly a score of years he was in charge of the police arrangements at Westminster, and lived through times that added exceptional labour and anxiety to the post. He assisted at Mr. Bradlaugh's repeated alarums and excursions. He personally conducted the police manœuvre that on one occasion landed the expelled member from Westminster at the foot of the staircase leading into Palace Yard, hatless, his clothes rent, and, as Mr. Bradlaugh said to me an hour or two later, a note of infinite pathos in his voice, "with my stylographic pen broken."

Of even more moment was the outbreak of Fenianism in Ireland which found echo in London in the explosion at the Home Office and elsewhere. It was known that the Fenians were bent upon getting admission to the House of Commons whilst it was sitting. There was talk, based upon something more substantial than conjecture, of a plot whereby was to be flung from the Stranger's Gallery a bomb directed with nice impartiality as near as possible to the very centre of the floor of the House. Among the police precautions then taken was the closing of Westminster Hall to the public. Nothing is heard of Fenianism to-day, and outrages of the kind common in the early eighties are matters of history. But our sapient authorities still keep the

magnificent passage through Westminster Hall closed against the people to whom it belongs.

The Claimant. Thirty years ago, when the Courts of Justice opened out on to Westminster Hall, they were, as far as police arrangements went, in charge of Inspector Denning. Thus it came to pass that when the trial of Arthur Orton on a charge of perjury terminated in a sentence of fourteen years' penal servitude, the convict was handed into his custody. An immense multitude surged outside Westminster Hall, waiting for a last glimpse of the corpulent criminal. It was of the utmost importance to get him away quietly, and Inspector Denning, a master of strategy, managed the business.

I was privileged to accompany him as he led the unresisting prisoner through the Court of Exchequer, by the Members' private staircase giving access to the lobby of the House of Commons, along the corridor, through the smoking-room, into the Commons' court-yard, where stood a plain police omnibus with an escort of eleven armed men. The Claimant took his seat and was driven to the Victoria Tower en route for Newgate, whilst the crowd still waited his coming outside Palace Yard. He walked along by Denning's elbow as quietly as if the Inspector were conducting him to his brougham. Only once he broke the silence of this first stage of his journey to Newgate.

"It's very hot," he said, mopping his head as he panted across the lobby of the House of Commons, "And I am so fat."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE WATER-LOGGED MINISTRY

A Stampede.—Lord Lansdowne.—The Royal Academy Dinner.—Henry Stanley.—A Lurking Enemy.—Gibes at the Treasury Bench.—Fiscal Reform.—A Potent Personality.—Changing Sides.—"Mr. Bull."—Confidence and Courage.—A Critical Question.—Disunited Unionists.

March 30. A Stampede. THERE was a scene in the House of Commons this afternoon which, though not unfamiliar in some of its aspects, is unparalleled in the completeness of its organization and the fullness of its success. Nothing is commoner than to see members rise in large numbers from both sides and hurry from the House when a bore succeeds in catching the Speaker's eye.

The oldest member cannot recall an instance when, a dashing speaker rising from either side, members of the party to which he nominally belongs with one accord walked out of the House.

This was what happened when Mr. Winston Churchill proposed to continue the debate on the motion for the adjournment of the House. Mr. Lloyd-George had a full, even a crowded, audience for the delivery of his speech. Mr. Churchill following him, the vast majority of Ministerialists above and below the gangway streamed forth into the lobby, amid ironical cheering from the Opposition. When the young member for Oldham resumed his seat Lord Hugh Cecil bent over and said some presumably sympathetic words.

April 15. Lord Lansdowne.

Striking proof of the hopelessness of the position of a water-logged Ministry is found in the fact that conclusion of the Anglo-French Agreement has done nothing in the way of re-establishing its position. Since the settlement of the Commercial Treaty with France nothing on approxi-

Winston Churchill and Lord Hugh Cecil.

mate lines has been accomplished with equally momentous results. Lord Lansdowne's *coup d'état* is, in its range of influence, more important than Mr. Cobden's historic achievement. Both contribute to the material prosperity of two nations.

The Anglo-French Convention adds assurance to the peace of Europe. On any one of three of the ancient quarrels happily patched up war might from time to

time have broken out across the Channel. On two several occasions open rupture was threatened. Henceforward, as the sorrowing widower engraved on the tombstone under record of the date of his wife's departure, it is "Peace, perfect Peace."

When, nearly five years ago, disclosure was made of the previously incredible default of War Office organization and administration, the public, clamouring for a victim, gnashed their teeth at Lord Lansdowne. So overwhelming was the clamour that the then Secretary of State for War was relieved of his command. It was taken for granted that he would, for a time at least, disappear from public life. To the marvel and bitter resentment of the public Lord Salisbury, instead of finally dismissing a discredited colleague, promoted him to more honourable and responsible position at the Foreign Office. On the death of the late Premier Lord Lansdowne succeeded him in the position of Leader of the House of Lords. There is now nothing left in the way of advancement but the Premiership.

Through these varying chances and changes of fortune Lord Lansdowne has remained unmoved. When, during the black weeks of December 1899, Magersfontein followed on disaster at Stormberg, and Buller's attempt to cross the Tugela was repulsed with heavy loss, when at home the air was filled with curses and lamentations, Lord Lansdowne said never a word in attempted vindication of his Department or himself. Nor did he break silence when, six weeks later, Parliament met. Only once he showed his teeth, and that was on a side issue connected with Lord Wolseley's services at the War Office. His unimpassioned manner whilst delivering that frontal attack added to its pitilessness and its effect. As a rule Lord Lansdowne's suavity is impregnable, his manner courteous, his voice cooing like a sucking dove. Those present during his attack on Lord Wolseley found revelation of the molten

fire that smoulders beneath what is customarily a frigidly polite manner.

May 2. The Royal Academy Dinner. Some surprise was occasioned by the absence of the Prime Minister from the Royal Academy Banquet last night. For many years under earlier régimes the Premier was the principal personage at the Banquet. Mr. Disraeli, Lord Salisbury, Mr. Gladstone, and Lord Rosebery have in turn contributed important speeches to the classical symposium. In his earliest year of the Premiership Mr. Balfour fell in with the custom, sparkling in speech in fashion worthy of his predecessors. For the last two or three years his place has been conspicuously unoccupied.

The explanation throws a sidelight on a charmingly unconventional character. When he sat down at the Banquet he invariably found himself placed between two colleagues with whom he had been associated through the preceding week's work. In telling me the story he mentioned, probably without special personal meaning, certainly without asperity, the names of Sir Michael Hicks Beach and Lord George Hamilton as flanking him on either side. He wrote to the President, pointing out how much more agreeable it would be on such occasions to find himself seated by some great artist, whose conversation might get adrift from the political arena. Sir Edward Poynter replied insisting on the jealousies that would arise upon charges of invidious selection of the Premier's companions.

"Very well, then," Mr. Balfour responded, "you must excuse me from accepting your invitation."

And he has not since done so.

May 10. Henry Stanley. It is a bitter reflection on the permanency of fame that the news of Henry Stanley's death was received with general exclamation

of surprise that he had but yesterday been still alive. At one time, not many years ago, his personality filled two hemispheres with its renown. Not quite four years have sped since he withdrew from Parliamentary life and social relations with London, disappearing as completely from the public eye as if he had already descended to the grave.

Though in accordance with his reticent nature he said little on the subject, he was undoubtedly disappointed with his brief Parliamentary career. For some time before offering himself as a candidate he regarded the House of Commons as a new world to conquer, victory being assured. He had never failed in any enterprise undertaken, and the House of Commons wasn't going to beat him. But it did. He betrayed none of that stage fright that frequently besets eminent men in making their maiden speech. In his *Life of Gladstone* Mr. Morley relates, on the personal authority of the Member for Newark, that the future Premier was at the outset so terrified by his surroundings that before he rose to speak he uttered a silent prayer, as he might have done if he were walking out to execution. Stanley did not falter, and in the three or four efforts he made (they did not exceed that number), said what he had to say. But he really knew nothing about politics, and came to the House too late to fall in with its ways.

A Lurking Enemy.

Another thing that sorely handicapped him was a recurrent sickness, legacy of hardships suffered in his quests through the Darkest Continent. Whilst he was still in the House he told me he never knew from week to week, or even from day to day, when the lurking enemy might not suddenly spring upon him, laying him helpless in bed. No man can with impunity go through such days and nights as Stanley passed in desert Africa. When he decided upon retirement from life in London, and built himself

a house in Surrey, he specially designed a dining-room with intent that once a year the surviving companions of his varied expeditions should meet, as the remnant of the men who rode in the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava dine to this day. When the house was finished and the room ready, there were only two to sit at the table—Stanley and Mr. Jephson, who commanded a detachment in the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition which set forth in 1887.

The nobility of Stanley's character was occasionally marred by manner. Under the veneer of the London denizen there was ever ready for exhibition a patch of the rough hide of the savage. In the height of his fame, a lion for whom all London hostesses were competing, I have seen him sitting at a dinner-table saying never a word, his glum presence casting a chill over what should have been a festive assembly. Yet he could talk brightly enough if in the mood, and in congenial company.

This brusque, overbearing, occasionally actually rude manner he carried into other relations of life and work. Mr. Cathcart Wason, a member of the present House of Commons, for many years resident in New Zealand, tells me a characteristic story. Stanley visited Christchurch in the course of his lecturing tour. The principal inhabitants, headed by Mr. Wason, wishing to pay him a courtesy, called on him at his hotel with an invitation to supper after his lecture.

"What do you want?" Stanley gruffly asked, half-opening his sitting-room door in response to their knock. They told him their errand. "I never go out to supper," said the irascible Welshman, and shut the door in their astonished faces.

May 11. Gibes at the Treasury Bench. The House of Commons, mortally smitten by the introduction of the Protectionist squabble, overhung by the ever-present

shadow of dissolution, is a grievously dull place. But there are occasional flashes of its old humour.

There is on the Orders of the Day a Bill regulating the maintenance and control of Feeble-Minded Persons. To-day a Member interested in the measure asked a question as to its prospects.

The Minister having made reply, an Irish member rose, and with blandest manner said, "May I ask, Mr. Speaker, whether this Bill has any direct personal reference to His Majesty's Government?"

On another night a member on the Ministerial side below the gangway got hopelessly mixed in his argument. Blundering along, he at length came to a dead stop.

"Take care," said a voice from the benches opposite, "or they'll be putting you into the Ministry."

In France it is said ridicule kills. Our Government, constant target of shots like this, lives on.

May 18. Fiscal Reform.

To-night the House was filled from floor to topmost range of the strangers' gallery. Members who on critical occasions could not be brought down at nine o'clock even to save the best of all Governments from defeat, were promptly in their places. Many, to make quite sure, dined at the House, with their eye on the clock. When the Speaker took the chair he interrupted that buzz of excitement that arises only on the rare occasions when the House is moved to deepest depths.

One intimately acquainted with the House of Commons, happening on the scene without foreknowledge of its occasion, would instinctively have guessed the secret. "Joe must be at the bottom of it." Yes, it was Mr. Chamberlain, the only man who could move the sluggish pond of Wednesday's Parliament, transforming it into this seething maelstrom. Had his spring holiday covered this particular week the action

of an obscure Scotch member would have fizzled out in the ordinary fashion of private members' motions on Wednesday nights. Mr. Black, with national canniness, played with a bait Mr. Chamberlain found irresistible. Not only did his resolution touch the question of Fiscal Reform. It was adroitly fashioned so as to pin down Mr. Balfour to the declaration that "the protective taxation of food would be burdensome to the people and injurious to the nation." After some hesitation Mr. Chamberlain came to the front with an amendment. Instanter the whole situation was changed. The motion of the private member became of prime importance, elbowing aside mere trifles such as an expenditure of a hundred and forty millions a year discussed at the morning sitting on the second reading of the Budget Bill.

A Potent Personality.

Mr. Chamberlain's personality pervaded the animated debate as it had controlled its action. Mr. Balfour is Prime Minister. At the last moment, with haste that denoted apprehension of danger, he superseded his former colleague's amendment to Mr. Black's resolution by one of his own. His official place gave him precedence. But it was on Mr. Chamberlain, seated below the gangway, that all eyes were fixed. At him everybody spoke, allusions to him were taken up with angry cheers met by fierce counter-cheering.

Not since Mr. Gladstone was in his prime, the object of private hatred and political dread in the Tory camp, has there been seen anything like the influence of a personality to the extent swayed to-day by the ex-Colonial Secretary. The difference is that whilst Mr. Gladstone faced his foe he had at his back and on his flank an enthusiastic body of supporters. The Free Fooders, who include in their ranks the flower of the Unionist Party, distrust and detest Mr. Chamberlain

with a bitterness not exceeded by the Radicals opposite, of whom twenty years ago he was the risen hope. Evidence of this was forthcoming to-night in the brilliant speech of Lord Hugh Cecil, one of the few men on either side who can stand up in debate on equal terms with Mr. Chamberlain.

June 8. Changing Sides. Winston Churchill this afternoon abandoning the Unionist camp seated himself among the Radicals below the gangway opposite. The move as affecting his future career is frankly discussed in the smoking-room and other social resorts of members. On the whole, regarding the matter strictly from that point of view, it is agreed that he has made a mistake. As Mr. Chamberlain recently demonstrated, a man who has established a weighty position in political life may with personal advantage go over to the ancient enemy. The Member for Oldham has, not yet reached that position. He is still a skirmisher in the political field, and carries only the weight of his sharp-shooting rifle to the aid of his new comrades.

Lord Hugh Cecil, it is contended, has chosen the better part. He has shown himself equally restive on development of Balfourian policy, especially with respect to Fiscal Reform. But he has decided to maintain his independence from the more advantageous position within the Unionist camp. A man of even ordinary capacity, criticizing the Government or the Opposition leaders from within their ranks, is infinitely more effective than if he spoke from the other side. Lord Hugh Cecil is of such commanding ability that this consideration would not fully apply to him. From whichever side he spoke the House would be constrained to listen. Nevertheless, there is much in the condition.

Lord Hugh will remain in the political fold in which

he was born, and in due time, if he lives and maintains his health, will succeed to the Premiership held by his father and in succession by his cousin. Winston Churchill may be safely counted upon to make himself quite as disagreeable on the Liberal side as he did on the Unionist. But he will be handicapped by the aversion that always pertains to a man who, in whatsoever honourable circumstances, has turned his coat. In running for the prize of office he will, moreover, be brought in competition with many able men of his own age who, having been loyal to Liberalism throughout, will resent being set aside in favour of a late comer to the vineyard.

June 9. "Mr. Bull!"

Mr. Chamberlain was to-night seated at the hospitable board spread in his honour by Colonel Pryce-Jones. At the other end of the corridor, across the lobby, the House of Commons was discussing the desirability of a tramway in Tottenham Court Road. The host had proposed the health of his distinguished guest. The cheering with which it was received had subsided. The apostle of Fair Trade was about to rise to respond, when a strange rumble was heard. The guests, turning their eyes in the direction of the sound, discovered a movement on a board over the fireplace. Something was being spelled out. Mr. Chamberlain waited till the interruption of the rumbling should cease. It finished and behold, writ large on the white paper, was "Mr. Bull!"

Then Mr. Chamberlain rose and began his speech.

Of course it was an accident. But how exquisite in the finish it gave to the occasion! The Member for Montgomery had invited the ex-Colonial Secretary to dinner in the House of Commons to meet the Welsh Unionist Members. The very phrase was interesting. There is record in history of Three Tailors in Tooley

Street. How many Welsh Unionists are there in the House of Commons? Five mustered at the roll of the drum. But the spacious room was otherwise filled, chiefly by representative men from the Principality. Many had travelled specially to town, for the occasion, and were returning to their important businesses on the morrow. All were agog to hear the statesman who, setting on one side minor questions of politics or party, embodying in himself the instincts and attributes of empire, had devoted the closing years of a distinguished and strenuous life to the effort of drawing closer the ties of kinship between the Mother country set in northern seas and her many children peopling the ends of the earth. His family name was Chamberlain. At the baptismal font he received a prosaic adjunct. But here, by the spontaneous, almost uncanny, working of an unseen instrument he was introduced to his fellow guests by the name typical of the world-striding, sea-compelling Englishman—Mr. Bull.

It is narrated in the City how, on a recent occasion, when Mr. Chamberlain entered Guildhall with intent to address a meeting of citizens on the fiscal question, the ecstatic bandmaster led off the National Anthem. That was well meant, but incongruous. Premeditated, it lacked the charm of spontaneity. This writing on the wall by unseen hands of a tribute to the character and tendency of Mr. Chamberlain's new policy was the merest accident. If it momentarily puzzled the strangers, the five Welsh Unionist Members knew it merely conveyed the information that at this particular moment in the House of Commons the Member for Hammersmith, senior partner in the firm of Bull and Bull, solicitors, Essex Street, Strand, had risen to join in debate on the Tramways Bill. That is the prose of the case. The emotionable mind recognized the poetry of the coincidence that, the ex-Colonial Secretary rising to his feet to plead the

cause of Empire, the annunciator, after certain wheezy preliminaries, introduced—"Mr Bull."

Confidence and Courage.

There has been talk of Mr. Chamberlain failing in health through overwork, blenching in courage at successive repulses at bye-elections. For those who watched and listened to him at the Pryce-Jones dinner, these illusions, if ever accepted, vanished. In excellent health, brimful of energy, he is to-day as confident of winning as he was when in May of last year he startled the world by proclaiming his new crusade. He admitted that if beaten he will retire from the political arena, resting and thankful in the private life that has many resources for him. But that was an aside. He means to win, and possesses the first element of success in the confidence that he will overcome all obstacles. Possibly he might if he were twenty, or even ten, years younger. Still, some men, like all women, are just as young as they feel. Mr. Chamberlain, with his eye steadfastly fixed on the glowing prospect of a nation nourished for sixty years on Free Trade, within the space of two years, or three, reconverted to principles of Protection, does not feel a day older than forty, a calculation which gives him plenty of time to accomplish his appointed work.

The political question apart, it is a splendid spectacle of energy, capacity, and courage. A man with his back to the wall, fighting against illimitable odds, confident that in the end he will come out victor, ever commands admiration. In this attitude Mr. Chamberlain, talking to-night in the obscurity of a semi-private dining-room, was at his very best.

June 29. A Critical Question.

To-day the Members of the Liberal Union Club met to consider a crisis in their career. Proposal was made that a delegation of thirty-six members should be sent to represent the

Club at the meeting on the 15th inst. of the Liberal Unionist Council to be held under the presidency of Mr. Chamberlain on the appropriate stage of the Imperial Theatre. The new departure was proposed in cut-and-dried resolution, in appearance innocent even to the verge of dullness. But members knew very well what it meant. An association formed at a critical epoch for the definite purpose of resisting a scheme of Home Rule for Ireland was to be enlisted on behalf of a new and quite different crusade under the thinly draped flag of Protection.

The frigid coolness of the resolution to be submitted to the meeting found sharp contrast in the heated atmosphere of the crowded room. That mailed knight, Sir Fortescue Flannery, with memories of effigies of crusading ancestors sleeping with crossed legs on tombstones in crumbling country churchyards, earnestly desired to have a preliminary bout with Arthur Elliot who, with a facility that would have gratified Mr. Crummles, had been getting "something in the papers." Mr. Elliot laughed back irritating defiance. But for the firmness of Lord James of Hereford, who spends the declining years of an honourable life in endeavouring to patch up miscellaneous differences, gore would have spouted in the Whitehall Rooms. As it was the lists rang with bitter colloquy.

"My honourable friend may smile audibly," said Sir Flannery, with, perhaps unconscious, reminiscence of an historic remark by Viscount Cross whilst he was yet with us in the House of Commons.

"Nothing," retorted Mr. Arthur Elliot, making a few passes with his stick in the direction of the irascible knight, "would give me greater pleasure than to cross swords with Sir Fortescue Flannery, or Mr. Parker Smith. If I had done so they would have found something a little more than the defensive in my reply."

"Why drag in Velasquez?" Whistler asked when

a feminine admirer told him that he and the Spanish painter were the greatest the world had known. Why drag in Parker Smith upon the scene of this encounter, sanguinary issue averted only by the practised hand of the Chairman? There is something placid in the very name of the Lanarkshire Member. Had he been sent forth into the world as Napoleon Smith, Julius Cæsar Smith, or even Alexander Smith, Mr. Arthur Elliot's threatening gesture and truculent words would have been more appropriate. The point will be seen if we consider for a moment the difference between the very sound of "Parker Smith" and "Fortescue Flannery." One is suggestive of the peace of a cathedral close, or of a blameless elder circumambulating the aisles of a Methodist chapel carrying the collection plate on a Sabbath morning. In the syllables of the other the sensitive ear recognizes the note of fractious, flustering, flaming, flagellating floccillation.

Disunited Unionists.

That is a digression, for which primarily Sir Fortescue Flannery, in degree the ex-Financial Secretary to the Treasury, are responsible. Following more closely the proceedings at this epoch-making gathering we shall see Mr. Arthur Elliot moving an amendment protesting against the resources and energies of the Club being used to promote the policy of the Tariff Reform League. In a sentence he put the issue before the meeting and the larger body of Liberal Unionists.

"Is Mr. Chamberlain to be placed at the head of the party because the Duke of Devonshire is not a good Unionist, or because Mr. Chamberlain is a tariff reformer?" A multitude of speeches may be made, volumes of articles may be written—they cannot more forcibly, clearly, and accurately summarize the situation in which Liberal Unionists stand. The answer

given by the Liberal Union Club was that 108 voted for capitulation to the strong hand that has created the new organization, 64 against it.

Then followed a dramatic scene. It has been rehearsed through the ages in diverse circumstances where apparently forlorn hopes have been led. Springing to his feet, and waving the stick that an hour earlier had almost punctured Sir Fortescue Flannery's tyre, Mr. Arthur Elliot cried aloud, "To me, knights, to me! Those that are with me meet me on the battlements above the donjon keep"—or words to that effect. Then he strode forth through the scowling lines of the Protectionists, sixty-three good men and true falling in line, unmindful of the frowns of Fortescue Flannery, Knight, ignoring the hand of Mr. Parker Smith instinctively outstretched under the impression that it held the collection plate. Seeing the congregation dispersing the gesture, involuntary, was inevitable.

CHAPTER XXV

A SECOND MINISTERIAL DEFEAT

Shouting Down the Premier.—The Writing on the Wall.—Law Officers' Fees.—Tuesday or Wednesday?—A Little Mixed.—The Speaker Sent For.—Mr. Balfour at Bay.—Manœuvring for Position.—A Surprise.—Black Rod.—Paralysis.—Prorogation.

July 6. Shouting Down the Premier.

Dr. Guillotin, though imprisoned for some time during the Reign of Terror, and daily expecting summons to the scaffold, finally escaped contact with the terrible machine to which his name was given. Mr. Balfour was less fortunate. Yesterday he carried a motion ordering that at eleven o'clock on appointed days the guillotine should fall upon debate on amendments to the Licensing Bill. This evening, the first day so appointed, he was the earliest victim of the silencing machine.

The scene recalled the turmoil of Irish coercion days and, more closely, the pitched battle on the floor of the House which marked an analogous stage in the history of the Home Rule Bill of 1893. We have not yet had the free fight. But it was only by persistent endeavour the leaders of the Opposition succeeded in averting a performance that would have rivalled one of the Session of 1881, when thirty-seven Irish Members were suspended. The proposal, much in favour of the rank and file, was to remain seated when the Speaker ordered the House to be cleared for a division At least a hundred members were prepared to take part in the plot. The consequence would have been that the Speaker would have "named" each member

in succession for disobeying the authority of the Chair, formal motion for his suspension would have been submitted, and a division would have followed. As a division itself occupies from twelve to fifteen minutes, according to the number taking part in it, it is obvious that this performance, thoroughly carried out, would have occupied the greater part of two sittings.

The counsel of the leaders prevailed, and the plan of campaign was abandoned. But the angry feeling evoked found issue in other ways. In spite of blunders and shortcomings, Mr. Balfour remains perhaps the most popular man in the House of Commons. Liberals hate his policy, but succumb to the charm of his manner. In the roughest time he has hitherto been able to ride on the whirlwind of passion. To-night the spell was broken.

In accordance with his resolution, the guillotine was to fall on the stroke of eleven o'clock, cutting off opportunity of debating any one of the crowd of amendments to the Licensing Bill still remaining. At three minutes to eleven the Premier rose and essayed to speak. Instantly burst forth a storm of personal execration amid which was heard the angry hiss, rarest of un-Parliamentary sounds. The Premier faced the storm with set lips and frowning brow. This sort of thing was past a joke, and there was no opening for the smile that played over his countenance in roughest times of heretofore. Once or twice he endeavoured to speak, the moving of his lips being the signal for louder, angrier cries of "Gag, gag!" responded to by stentorian shouts of "Hyah! Hyah!" from the faithful Howard Vincent.

He stood till the hand of the clock touched eleven, when amid a deafening roar he sat down, the first victim of his own newly-erected guillotine. Under his resolution, which became operative at eleven o'clock, speech was forbidden.

July 9. The Writing on the Wall. A profound sensation was created in the House of Lords to-night when Lord Roberts in his quiet, untheatrical manner expressed the opinion that the British Army is as absolutely unfitted for war as it proved to be when it set out with a light heart for the Cape, the officers' baggage labelled "Pretoria."

"The Faithful Howard Vincent."

"Five years have passed since the war in South Africa began," said Lord Roberts, "but its lessons have been forgotten. Our army is reduced to a minimum in numbers. It is trained in most inadequate manner. Its musketry practice is hopelessly limited, and it is without the auxiliary forces organized to form a sufficient and efficient reserve."

Beyond the high position of the veteran soldier who, after superhuman exertions, finally redeemed the country from the peril into which it was lured by War Office incapacity, weight was lent to Lord Roberts' words by the fact that they were carefully written down and read from MS.

The country had begun to forget the disclosures made in connexion with the supply of remounts. It had almost ceased to talk about the later scandals revealed in the evidence given before the Butler Commission. This matter-of-fact statement by the highest living authority, showing how, after colossal expenditure, the Army remains much as it stood five years ago, has created a feeling approaching despair.

July 12. Law Officers' Fees. Sir Edward Clarke some years ago declined the proffered Attorney-Generalship on the plea that it was not worth the acceptance of a barrister in large practice under the condition, newly enforced, that he should not take briefs from the public. The salary of the Attorney-General is £7,000, the Solicitor-General being paid £1,000 a year less. That would certainly fall short of the average earnings of a man holding Sir Edward Clarke's place at the bar. Gradually, however, things have righted themselves. There has grown up and extended the practice of exacting fees for other than routine work common to the Law Office.

A return just made to the House of payments made to Sir Robert Finlay, Attorney-General, and Sir Edward Carson, Solicitor-General, show that their official fees considerably exceed their salaries. During the last financial year the Attorney-General drew in fees the quaintly-precise sum of £12,921 7*s*. 9*d*. The Solicitor-General fobbed ninepence less than £7,069. The total income of the head of the English Bar thus worked out to £19,921 7*s*. 9*d*., his colleague pocketing

£13,058 19*s.* 3*d.* These incomes compare with the £5,000 a year, the maximum salary of a Cabinet Minister, and more closely with the £10,000 a year drawn by Lord Halsbury in his dual capacity of Lord Chancellor and Speaker of the House of Lords.

The latter work does not come to much. But the Lord Chancellor sits daily through a considerable portion of the year in the Court of Appeal, drudgery that finds no parallel in the case of his legal colleagues of lower professional rank.

July 20. Tuesday or Wednesday ?

"When is a door not a door?" is a problem which, with its simple answer, has been familiar to most of us since infancy. A newer and more difficult puzzle to-day floored the House of Commons in the inquiry, "At what period of Tuesday does Wednesday begin?" The circumstance that the poser presented itself at a time when the House had been in session for twenty-four hours did not lessen the difficulty.

It was all very well for Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman who started the hare to revel in the chase. Like a wise man he had gone off to bed at a moderately early hour yesterday, and, buoyant from his bath, blissful with breakfast, returned at eleven o'clock this morning. It was different with the Premier. With brief interval for dinner he had been at his post since two o'clock yesterday afternoon. To all the cares of Empire on his shoulders was added the burden of sitting up through a sultry summer night squabbling with gentlemen opposite about the coal tax and other matters.

It was, in view of the strain of the preceding twenty-four hours, hard lines to have dumped upon him this puzzler. It being two o'clock on the afternoon of July 20, 1904, was it Tuesday or Wednesday with the House of Commons?

"What about Prayers?"

The question is not so idiotic as it may seem to the sympathetic mind of the flippant and the ignorant. It had a practical bearing upon public business and its further disposition. To begin with all was clear. The House met at the accustomed hour of two o'clock on Tuesday, and took in hand the first Order of the Day-Committee stage of the Budget Bill. Wednesday when, under the New Rules, the House also meets at two o'clock, was allotted for a stage of the Licensing Bill. It was now within an hour of two o'clock. The Standing Order on the point is precise and peremptory. "Unless the House otherwise orders, the House shall meet every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at two o'clock for the afternoon sitting." Would it be entered upon forthwith, and if so would discussion on the Budget Bill lapse, and after questions on the Paper for Wednesday had been gone through, would the Licensing Bill be proceeded with?

Mr. Alfred Davies looking more than ever like Mr

Pickwick rose below the gangway and asked what about prayers? Here was another difficulty. The Standing Order decrees that at two o'clock, the House being cleared of strangers, prayers shall be said.

The hands of the clock almost signalled the hour of two. In the side gallery, looking down on the scene, sat the chaplain, ever ready at the call of duty. What about prayers?

A Little Mixed.

The Chairman of Ways and Means, appealed to, sententiously ruled "We are still in yesterday's sitting."

"Yes," said Mr. Balfour, gratefully shielding himself behind the Chair when the searchlight was next turned upon him; "as the Chairman has pointed out yesterday's sitting will remain until it comes to a conclusion."

Had he stopped there all would have been well. Not only was the statement absolutely incontrovertible in respect of fact, it had the authority of the Chair, whence indeed it had emanated. But like many men who have made a hit and feel encouraged by applause to flounder on, Mr. Balfour did not resume his seat.

"When we reach to-day," he added, "it will, I take it, in the ordinary course become an allotted day. To-morrow we will take Colonial Supply."

"Is that to-day?" inquired a dazed member.

"No," said Mr. Balfour, briskly, "that is Thursday."

Then C.-B., bubbling with breakfast, nipped in. "Will to-day," he asked, "be occupied in finishing yesterday's business?"

"That is so," the Premier answered shortly. Thus he gave himself away to the enemy. C.-B. was down on him like a falcon on a sparrow.

"In such case," he said, amid cheers from the jubilant Opposition, really led at last, "there cannot be

initiated a Wednesday sitting, and as it is now past twelve o'clock at midnight no fresh opposed business, such as the Licensing Bill, can be taken."

The Speaker Sent For.

This was incontestably true. Reappearing at the Table with forlorn air, the Premier suggested that the whole question should be left to the Speaker, who at least had had a night's uninterrupted rest. Leaning on the chair of the Deputy Speaker, it had sunk under him like a broken reed. Let the Speaker be sent for.

"It may be," he continued, speaking as one in a dream, "that when the Speaker comes he will say, 'As it is now one o'clock last night the sitting stands adjourned until to-morrow without question put. My own personal impression is that under the rules of the House, when Tuesday comes to an end Wednesday begins. But I do not press the point. It is subject to the ruling of the Speaker as to Wednesday's sitting. If," he added, with something of a wail in his voice, "Wednesday exists."

What was left of the Bill being hurried through Committee the Speaker was sent for and the Budget Bill reported. Mr. Gully made short work of the vexed problem that two hours earlier mystified great minds.

"The House," he said, "will now adjourn until to-morrow."

Had he left it there the old bewilderment would have spread again. When and what is to-morrow? Obviously it depended upon the shirked, undecided, question whether to-day was Tuesday or Wednesday. But the Speaker leaves nothing to chance.

"Until to-morrow;" then with firm resonant voice he added, "THURSDAY."

That settled it. Let the dead past bury its dead, whether it be Tuesday or Wednesday. The highest

authority had ruled that to-morrow will be Thursday. In this assurance members joyously rushed off, for the moment forgetting the weariness of a sitting little short of the full length of twenty-six hours.

July 24. Mr. Balfour at Bay.

On a sultry afternoon in July, with the end of a dull Session in sight, a moribund House of Commons suddenly leapt into vigorous life. Never since the day of its birth has it presented a scene like that witnessed this afternoon. From an early hour in the morning members trooped down to secure seats. Late comers were fain to be satisfied with places in the side galleries. When these also were closely packed the Bar was thronged by members who, through the exceptional length of Mr. Balfour's first speech, patiently stood. The Peers hurried down in numbers that overflowed the limits allotted to them. The Diplomatic Gallery was full, Mr. Whitelaw Reid, the newly-arrived American Ambassador, being prominent among Foreign Ministers looking down on a memorable spectacle.

On Thursday the Government were defeated by a majority of three. Mr. Balfour had taken time to consider the situation. To-day he was to announce the decision arrived at. Evidently he had bestowed much research upon the preparation of his speech, and infinite care in its elaboration. It was very cleverly done. Had he, after a few brief introductory sentences, made the plain announcement that Ministers had resolved to disregard the hostile vote there would have been an outburst of fury from the disappointed Opposition. Instead of that he went on for fully twenty minutes, quoting precedents, enlarging on modern instances, the House meanwhile breathlessly awaiting a definite declaration. Long before it was reached, the truth was borne in upon them and when, in a sort of aside, he remarked, " This is not an occasion on which

resignation and dissolution would be in conformity with constitutional practice," the minds of his listeners had grown so habituated to the situation that there was little demonstration.

As usual, when making a statement involving citation of facts and figures, Mr. Balfour was not at his best. He frequently mixed up 1873 and 1874, and could not remember the name of the measure defeat upon which led to Mr. Gladstone's resignation in the former year. The Irish Church Bill, he called it, and was momentarily upset when reminded from various quarters of the House that it was the Irish University Education Bill. This frailty led to a pretty little scene. Soon after the speech opened, Mr. John Morley, with justified prescience, sent "Bobby" Spencer to the Library for a volume of his *Life of Gladstone*. Stumbling over a quotation from a letter written by the Liberal chief to his colleague, Lord Granville, and observing the book on the biographer's knee, the Premier asked for loan of it. Mr. Morley, crossing the floor, handed over the book. But Mr. Balfour could not find the page he wanted, and asked Mr. Morley to oblige him by turning to it. This was done, the speech meanwhile being interrupted, and the crowded

"Bobby" Spencer.

House looking on, genially cheering one of the little personal incidents which delight it.

Manœuvring for Position.

A quarter of an hour later angry passion rose over a sudden turn given to events by inquiry as to whether the Premier meant to conclude his speech by a motion. The stranger in the gallery was doubtless puzzled by the animated conversation that followed. Lacking intimate knowledge of the forms of the House, he would not understand the sword-play across the Table. There being no motion before the House, it was impossible to embark on general debate. Mr. Balfour, assured of a muster of his men that gave him a majority of at least sixty, was not less eager than the Leader of the Opposition to divide on a motion. But who was to pull the chestnuts out of the fire? If he could only get Sir Edward Grey to go on with the Vote of Censure on the Fiscal Question that stood on the paper, and, by strange coincidence, was set down for debate to-day, it would be exceedingly convenient. But canny C.-B. was not to be led into the trap. Tactical advantage was not with the mover of the Resolution, but lay with those who opposed it.

The only alternative was to move the adjournment, obviously an inadequate form of censure. Here again there was more fencing. The Opposition insisted that the Premier should make the motion at the close of his speech. Mr. Balfour's quick mind perceived that if he did so he would be precluded from winding up the debate. Whereas if it were moved subsequent to his speech it would create a fresh phase of procedure upon which he was at liberty to speak again. So Sir A. Acland-Hood was put up to move the adjournment, his appearance at the Table having the happy result of momentarily whelming angry feeling in a jubilant burst of cheers and laughter prolonged by the lachrymose countenance of the vanquished Whip.

A Surprise. The episode abruptly closed in unexpected fashion. The Opposition, as we have seen, insisted upon a motion being put from the Chair. Mr. Balfour eagerly assented. In doing so he was at pains to make it understood that though the Resolution was humdrum in form it carried the weight and purpose of a vote of censure. The hostile forces were mustered in full number and the time was convenient for a trial of strength. When the Speaker put the question That the House do now adjourn, the Ministerialists, flushed with hope of a victory that would wipe out the disaster of Thursday night, lustily shouted "Aye." When the Speaker challenged for contradiction it was expected there would be almost equally lusty cry of "No." At whatever personal sacrifice to Mr. Swift MacNeill and some others, the wary Opposition remained mute. They had gained their purpose in having a five hours' debate. They were not going to contribute to the rehabilitation of the Ministry by a division.

There being no dissent, the House forthwith adjourned, both sides cheering and laughing as they went forth as if the joke of the day was the best they had ever assisted at.

July 25. Black Rod. By notable coincidence the death of Black Rod happens within a fortnight of the disappearance from the scene of a former Clerk of the House of Commons. General Biddulph reached his enviable post in the House of Lords in 1896, Sir Reginald Palgrave being promoted to the Chair at the Table of the House of Commons just ten years earlier. Both offices are held direct from the Crown, their duties looming large in legislative work in both Houses. The House of Lords' prize usually falls to the lot of a veteran either in the Army or Navy. The last holder, General Biddulph, was an old Crimean veteran. His

predecessor was an Admiral. The full title is "Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod," so called from the black wand, surmounted by a golden lion, he carries when he visits the House of Commons with summons to attend the other House, or when he accompanies the Lord Chancellor in his progress towards the Woolsack. Whilst the Clerk of the House of Commons is content with the ordinary wig and gown of a barrister, Black Rod is arrayed in velvet garb with white ruffles at the wrist, a sword by his side. When the House is sitting he occupies a sort of pew by the Bar, an excellent place for a snooze on the rare occasions when the Lords sit beyond the dinner-hour.

It is a prominent part of Black Rod's antique duties to summon the House of Commons to attend the House of Lords when a Royal Commission has been appointed to sit. The performance is a picturesque bit of history going back to earliest Parliamentary times. When Black Rod, wand in hand, is seen approaching from the House of Lords, the principal doorkeeper, seated at the opened portal of the House of Commons, leaps to his feet with such agility as advanced age makes possible, rushes inside, clangs to the great oak door, bolts and bars it. Black Rod, advancing, taps the door with rap of his lion-headed wand. The doorkeeper draws back a shutter in the doorway, and cautiously peering forth cries, "Who's there?"

Promptly comes the response, "Black Rod!"

The door is thereupon unbarred, thrown open, and the doorkeeper, advancing to the bar of the House, cries aloud, "Black Rod."

Whatever member may chance to be on his feet the interruption is not delayed. Black Rod is the direct personal messenger from the Sovereign sent to command the presence of the Commons in the other House. It has happened on more than one occasion that his

incursion found the Premier himself on his legs addressing the House. Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Balfour were in succession victims of the rude intrusion, a circumstance that led to hot resentment on the part of the Commons and an alteration of the possible time of Black Rod's arrival with a view to minimize risk.

Paralysis.

On General Biddulph's first appearance in the Commons in the character of Black Rod he, as earlier noted, made for himself a place in Parliamentary history. Arriving on his mission to summon the Commons to the other House, the old soldier got along well enough as far as concerned the much-rehearsed advance to the Table, with its thrice-made halt and low obeisance to the Chair. It was when he stood at the Table and had to deliver his message that he became absolutely dumbfounded.

"I desire to acquaint this honourable House"—— he said.

And there he stuck, gaping and gasping. Several attempts were made to give him the cue. He picked up a word here and there, not enough to carry him to the end. But for the presence of mind of the Speaker the scene might have been prolonged till hapless Black Rod was carried out stark. After a tragic pause the Speaker pleasantly remarked:

"We understand that you have come to signify that the Lords Commissioners desire the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the House of Peers to hear the Commission read."

Something clicked in Black Rod's throat. He feebly nodded his head in acquiescence, and the Speaker stepping down from the Chair led the procession to the Lords.

Next time the veteran General appeared on the scene a small piece of notepaper gleamed in the recesses of his cocked hat. This was his "part" written out. Assurance of its presence gave him courage, and amid

a generous cheer from the amused House he recited his message without a flaw.

Aug. 19. Prorogation. The Prime Minister has toiled terribly during the last six months, and shows evident signs of fatigue. He readily takes on colour from exposure to the sun, and came back from Lord Rothschild's last Monday looking quite ruddy. When the tan fades there comes again the almost haggard look under the sadly-thinned whitening locks. Reflection upon the course and results of the Session, marked as its last days are by another crushing defeat at the poll in Scotland, does not bring refreshment. Better were the Session barren than bear such fruit as the Licensing Bill, the Birmingham and Southwark Bishoprics Bill, and the Bill designed to coerce Welsh County Councils into support of denominational education. This last, it is already evident, carries with it the seed of serious trouble in Wales, hitherto most peaceful among Principalities.

The one circumstance on which Mr. Balfour may fairly congratulate himself is success in achieving the purpose with which he set out last February. He was then resolved to carry the Session on to the end, with intent to meet Parliament again next year. There were recurrent crises when the task seemed impossible. But, as Lord George Hamilton said of the Administration at a critical time of the war in South Africa, they "muddled along somehow." Under Mr. Balfour's resolute captaincy the Government, disregarding the rebuffs of a long series of bye-elections, closing its eyes to revolt within the Ministerial ranks, regarding with contempt indication of public feeling conveyed at the polls, ignoring diminished majorities, once resulting in absolute defeat in the Division Lobby, has staggered along and has at last reached the haven of recess, where Free Fooders cease from troubling and statesmen of "no settled convictions" are at rest.

CALENDAR—SESSION 1904.

*Bills marked thus * are Government Bills.*

FEBRUARY.

2. *Tues.*—Parliament opened by the King in person.
H. M. Speech. Address. Debate adjourned.
3. *Wed*—H. M. Speech. Address, Debate adjourned.
4. *Thur.*—H. M. Speech. Address.
Amendment, War in South Africa, *Mr. Robson.* Debate adjourned.
5. *Fri.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Division—For, 192. Against, 278. Debate adjourned.
8. *Mon.*—H. M. Speech, Address. Amendment, Protection Duties, *Mr. John Morley.* Debate adjourned.
9. *Tues.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Debate adjourned.
10. *Wed.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Debate adjourned.
11. *Thur.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Debate adjourned.
12. *Fri.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Debate adjourned.
15. *Mon.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Division—For, 276. Against, 327. Debate adjourned.
16. *Tues.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Transvaal (Chinese Labour), *Mr. Herbert Samuel.* Debate adjourned.
17. *Wed.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Division—For, 230. Against, 281.
18. *Thur.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Irish Land Act, 1903 (Amendment), *Mr. P. A. McHugh.* Division—For, 124. Against, 219.
18. *Fri.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Labour Department, *Mr. Keir Hardie.* Division—For, 151. Against, 231. Address agreed to.
22. *Mon.*—Supply: Army Estimates, 1903–4 (Supplementary).
23. *Tues.*—Supply: Navy, etc., Estimates, 1903–4 (Supplementary).
24. *Wed.*—Supply: Civil Services Estimates, 1903–4 (Supplementary).
25. *Thur.*—Supply: Army Estimates, 1903–4 (Supplementary).
*False Statements (Companies) Bill. First Reading.

26. *Fri.*—Musical Copyright Bill. Second Reading.
Mines (Eight Hours) Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
29. *Mon.*—Supply: Navy Estimates, 1904–5.

MARCH.

1. *Tues.*—Supply: Navy Estimates, 1904–5.
2. *Wed.*—Supply: Navy Estimates, 1904–5.
3. *Thur.*—Supply: First allotted day. Navy Estimates, 1903–4.
4. *Fri.*—Town Tenants (Ireland) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 162. Against, 199.
7. *Mon.*—Supply. Army Estimates, 1904–5. Debate adjourned.
8. *Tues.*—Supply: Army Estimates, 1904–5.
9. *Wed.*—Supply: Army Estimates, 1904–5.
10. *Thur.*—Supply: Second allotted day. Army Estimates, 1904–5.
11. *Fri.*—Land Values (Assessment and Rating) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 223. Against, 156.
14. *Mon.*—Supply: Third allotted day. Civil Services, etc. Vote on Account.
15. *Tues.*—Supply: Civil Services, etc., 1903–4 (Supplementary).
16. *Wed.*—Supply: Civil Services, etc., 1904–5. Vote on Account.
17. *Thur.*—Supply: Fourth allotted day.
Army (Annual) Bill. First Reading.
18. *Fri.*—Hall Marking of Foreign Plate. Second Reading. Division—For, 96. Against, 53.
Savings Banks Acts Amendment Bill. Second Reading.
Rating of Machinery. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
21. *Mon.*—Chinese Labour (Transvaal). Motion, *Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.* Division—For, 242. Against, 299.
22. *Tues.*—Ways and Means. Supply.
23. *Wed.*—*Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. First Reading. *Dogs Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
24. *Thur.*—*Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 139. Against, 39.

25. *Fri.*—Private Bill Legislation (Wales) Bill. Second Reading.
Shops Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
*Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. Committee.
28. *Mon.*—*Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. Third Reading.
*Education (Scotland) Bill. First Reading.
29. *Tues.*—*Aliens Bill. First Reading.
Police (Ireland). Motion, *Mr. Swift MacNeill.* Division—For, 65. Against, 157.
Adjournment until Tuesday, 12th April.

APRIL.

12. *Tues.*—Supply: FIFTH allotted day. Navy Estimates, 1904–5.
13. *Wed.*—*Army (Annual) Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
East Indian Revenues (Thibet). Motion, *Mr. Secretary Brodrick.* Division—For, 270. Against, 61.
14. *Thur.*—Supply: SIXTH allotted day. Army Estimates, 1904–5.
*Army (Annual) Bill. Second Reading. Bill committed.
15. *Fri.*—Weights and Measures Bill. Second Reading. Bill committed.
18. *Mon.*—Supply: Civil Services and Revenue Departments Estimates, 1903–4.
*Army (Annual) Bill. Committee.
19. *Tues.*—Ways and Means. Financial Statement, *Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*
*Army (Annual) Bill. Third Reading.
20. *Wed.*—*Licensing Bill. First Reading.
21. *Thur.*—Ways and Means. Committee.
22. *Fri.*—Trades Unions and Trade Disputes Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 238. Against, 199.
25. *Mon.*—*Aliens Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 241. Against, 117. Bill Committed.
26. *Tues.*—*Valuation Bill. First Reading.
*Education (Local Authority Default) Bill. First Reading.
*Shop Hours Bill. First Reading.
Ways and Means. Committee.

27. *Wed.*—Ways and Means. Report,
Cotton Growing (Africa). Motion, *Mr. J. Rutherford.*
28. *Thur.*—Supply: SEVENTH allotted day, Civil Services, etc., 1904–5.
29. *Fri.*—Local Government (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 137. Against, 205.
Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Scotland Bill). Second Reading. Debate adjourned.

MAY.

2. *Mon.*—*Education (Scotland) Bill. Second Reading. Bill committed.
3. *Tues.*—Ways and Means.
*Finance Bill. First Reading.
4. *Wed.*—Bishoprics of Southwark and Birmingham Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 236. Against, 120.
Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act. Motion, *Mr. Boland.* Division—For, 124. Against, 197.
5. *Thur.*—Supply: EIGHTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1904–5.
6. *Fri.*—Registration of Clubs (Ireland) Bill. Second Reading.
Aged Pensioners Bill. Second Reading.
9. *Mon.*—*Licensing Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
10. *Tues.*—*Licensing Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
11. *Wed.*—*Licensing Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 353. Against, 196.
12. *Thur.*—Supply: NINTH allotted day. Civil Services, 1904–5.
13. *Fri.*—Merchant Shipping (Lighthouses) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 155. Against, 129.
16. *Mon.*—*Solicitors Bill. First Reading.
*Finance Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
17. *Tues.*—*Finance Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
18. *Wed.*—*Finance Bill. Second reading. Division—For, 278. Against, 165.

19. *Thur.*—Judicature and Development Grant (Ireland) Bill. First Reading.
House adjourned until Tuesday, 31st May.
31. *Tues.*—Supply: TENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1904–5.

JUNE.

1. *Wed.*—*Anglo-French Convention Bill. Second Reading.
*Shop Hours Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 130. Against, 42.
2. *Thur.*—Supply: ELEVENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1904–5.
3. *Fri.*—*Penal Servitude Bill. Second Reading.
6. *Mon.*—*Licensing Bill. Committee.
7. *Tues.*—*Licensing Bill. Committee.
8. *Wed.*—*Licensing Bill. Committee.
9. *Thur.*—Supply: TWELFTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1904–5.
10. *Fri.*—Musical Copyright Bill, as amended by the Standing Committee.
13. *Mon.*—*Education (Scotland) Bill. Committee.
14. *Tues.*—*Education (Scotland) Bill. Committee.
15. *Wed.*—*Education (Scotland) Bill. Committee.
16. *Thur.*—Supply: THIRTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1904–5.
17. *Fri.*—Railways (Private Sidings) Bill, as amended. Bill read third time.
Hall-Marking of Foreign Plate Bill, as amended. Bill read third time.
Savings Banks Acts Amendment Bill, as amended.
20. *Mon.*—*Finance Bill. Committee.
21. *Tues.*—*Finance Bill. Committee.
22. *Wed.*—*Finance Bill. Committee.
23. *Thur.*—Supply: FOURTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1904–5.
24. *Fri.*—*Labourers (Ireland) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 316. Against, 27.
27. *Mon.*—*Licensing Bill. Committee.
28 *Tues.*—*Licensing Bill. Committee.
29. *Wed.*—*Licensing Bill. Committee.
30. *Thur.*—Supply: FIFTEENTH allotted day. Army Estimates, 1904–5.

JULY.

1. *Fri.*—*Licensing Bill (Procedure). Motion, *Mr. Balfour.*
4. *Mon.*—*Licensing Bill (Procedure). Motion, *Mr. Balfour.*
5. *Tues*—*Licensing Bill (Procedure). Motion, *Mr. Balfour.* Division—For, 262. Against, 207.
6. *Wed.*—*Licensing Bill. Committee. FIRST allotted day.
7. *Thur.*—Supply: SIXTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1904–5.
8. *Fri.*—*Irish Land Bill. Second reading. Division—For, 199. Against, 82.
   Savings Banks Acts Amendment Bill. Third Reading.
11. *Mon.*—*Licensing Bill Committee. SECOND allotted day.
12. *Tues.*—*Licensing Bill Committee. THIRD allotted day.
13. *Wed.*—*Licensing Bill Committee. FOURTH allotted day. Bill reported.
14. *Thur.*—Supply: SEVENTEENTH allotted day. Army Estimates, 1904–5.
   Army Re-organization. Statement, *Mr. Arnold Forster.*
15. *Fri.*—*Education (Local Authority Default) Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 233. Against, 102.
18. *Mon.*—*Finance Bill. Committee.
19. *Tues.*—*Finance Bill. Committee.
20. *Wed.*—*Finance Bill. Committee. Bill reported.
21. *Thur.*—Supply: EIGHTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1904–5.
22. *Fri.*—*Finance Bill, as amended.
25. *Mon.*—*Finance Bill, as amended.
26. *Tues.*—*Licensing Bill, as amended. FIFTH allotted day.
27. *Wed.*—*Licensing Bill, as amended. SIXTH allotted day.
28. *Thur.*—*Finance Bill. Third Reading. Division—For, 206. Against, 129.
29. *Fri.*—*Licensing Bill. Third Reading. Division—For, 217. Against, 129.

AUGUST.

1. *Mon.*—Ministers of the Crown (Preferential Duties). Motion, *Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.* Division—For, 210. Against, 288.

2. *Tues.*—Business of the House (Government Business). Motion, *Mr. Balfour.* Division—For, 216. Against 128.
Supply: Civil Services, etc., (Supplemental) Estimates, 1904–5.
3. *Wed.*—Supply: NINETEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1904–5.
4. *Thur.*—Supply: TWENTIETH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1904–5.
5 *Fri.*—*Education (Local Authority Default) Bill. Committee. Bill reported.
8, *Mon.*—Supply: TWENTY-FIRST allotted day, Army Estimates, 1904–5.
9. *Tues.*—Supply: TWENTY-SECOND allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1904–5.
*Education (Local Authority Default) Bill. Third Reading.
*Expiring Laws Continuance Bill. Committee.
10. *Wed.*—Supply: TWENTY-THIRD allotted day. Revenue Departments, etc.
*Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. First Reading.
11. *Thur.*—*Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Second Reading.
*Expiring Laws Continuance Bill. Committee and Third Reading.
12. *Fri.*—*Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Committee.
East India Revenue Accounts. Committee.
*Anglo-French Convention Bill. Third Reading.
13. *Sat.*—*Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Third Reading.
15. *Mon.*—H. M. Speech.
Prorogation of Parliament.

CHAPTER XXVI

TWO OLD PARLIAMENTARY HANDS

A Parliamentary Veteran.—"Jemmy" Lowther.—A Typical Tory.—A Prime Bull.

Sept. 1. A Parliamentary Veteran.

THE passing of Sir William Harcourt achieved to-day was a beautiful rounding off of a strenuous life. A fighter in every fibre, never so happy as when with back to the wall he faced overwhelming odds, he died in his sleep.

> Say not Good night, but in some brighter clime
> Bid me Good morning.

This habit of tussling for the right, combined with occasional utterance of irascible remark, is responsible for the House of Commons tradition that Sir William was of cantankerous habit. Some years ago there was current a fable about a dinner-party jointly given by six men. In fantastic mood it was resolved that each should invite the most disagreeable man he knew. When they foregathered at the table it was found that the party consisted of seven. Each of the hosts had asked Harcourt.

It is true he was impatient with mediocrity, scornful of pretension, even turbulently angry with meanness, baseness, or anything that fell short of his lofty ideal of gentlemanhood. But in the social circle, assuming it to be peopled with desirable persons, he was invari-

ably charming. His long experience of men and affairs, his wide range of reading, his tenacious memory, and his sparkling wit, made him delightful company. Had the spiteful story turned upon the point that each of the hosts was pledged to invite the most popular diner-out of the day, the consequence reported would have been more reasonable.

A masterful Radical leavened by Whig culture, no political fence circumscribed his social relations. He was one of the few men who, after the split in the Liberal party following on the introduction of the Home Rule Bill, preserved intact ancient friendships. There was nothing small about Sir William Harcourt, corporeally, intellectually, or morally. "Humour, above all good humour," he privily wrote to Toby M.P., "is the salt of life, and you have set the example in applying to politics this excellent antiseptic."

The habit here generously extolled Sir William himself observed in all his relations with life, public or private. Of late years complaint was made that he handicapped his running in debate by the avoirdupois weight of his notes. He certainly wrote out in the seclusion of his study his more important speeches. As his eyesight weakened, the awkwardness of reading his manuscript became more oppressive to the audience. He was aware of the disadvantage, and was ready to defend it. All orations that have lived through the ages were, he insisted with copious circumstance, prepared in manuscript. He held it to be a just tribute to the dignity and importance of the House of Commons that a man addressing it should give it his very best prepared without stint of time or toil.

His orations were not written out for lack of ability to deliver extemporaneous speech. He was at his best when some sudden turn of debate called him to his feet. At such times, in sonorous voice, accom-

panied by gestures elephantine in their force, he with scathing tongue shortly said the right thing in perfect phrase. Biographical notices that filled the papers during the week following the Great Commoner's death, reiterated the more familiar stories illustrative of his wit and humour in the House of Commons. One escaped the recollection of the chroniclers. It was in the Session of 1893, when, the Home Rule Bill having been shouldered through the Commons, Sir Henry Fowler, by dint of much adroitness, managed to carry his Parish Councils Bill. A General Election imminent, leaders on both sides were anxious to show that, in this matter, Short not Codlin was the true friend of the agricultural voter. Mr. Goschen, still with us in the Commons, claimed to be the real father of the Bill, since in an earlier Session he had made the first move towards the establishment of Parish Councils. This said, he proceeded to urge the Government to destroy their bantling, by leaving out the essential portion dealing with the Poor Law.

"The House," said Harcourt, "bearing in mind the judgment of Solomon, will perceive who truly is not the parent of this Bill. It certainly is not the right hon. gentleman, who more than consents, who actually proposes, to cut it in twain."

For thirty years Sir William Harcourt played a prominent part in home politics. He was more than a fighter, though when occasion arose he could swashbuckle it with the best of them. He was a consummate general, as was shown by his defeat of the Tithes Bill. He was a master of finance, as testified by the imperishable monument of his Death Duties Budget. He carried into public life and party action the purest creed of honour. He was, as Mr. Balfour said to me, talking at a time when almost personal animosity was evoked in discussion on the Education Bill, "the last and one of the greatest of the old school of Parliamentarians."

Sept. 13. "Jemmy" Lowther.

Jemmy Lowther has not long tarried after the departure of his old friend Harcourt. His death breaks one of the few remaining links of the House of Commons with the storied past. The proper style of the Member for Thanet was the Right Hon. James Lowther. To two generations of House of Commons men he was affectionately known as "Jemmy." He took his seat nearly forty years ago, coming in with the majority that triumphantly reinstated Palmerston in power. He, however, never "sat under" the chief whose banner he carried to victory in York, Palmerston dying before meeting the new Parliament. "Dizzy," in his brief Administration of 1868, made him Parliamentary Secretary to the Poor-Law Board. When, in 1874, the Conservatives came into power as well as into office, "Jemmy" Lowther was promoted to the Under Secretaryship of the Colonies, and after four years went to Ireland, where he was Chief Secretary. Then the General Election of 1880 came and made clean sweep of his party.

A Typical Tory.

This was the end of "Jemmy's" Ministerial career. He was without a seat when a Unionist Government came into office in 1886. Returning to Westminster in 1888 he has since from a corner seat below the gangway watched the course of Parliamentary affairs with the eye of a hale and highly respectable father. He was the last type left to a twentieth century Parliament of the real old Tory. He would have no truck with the new nomenclature of Unionist, Liberal or Conservative. A Tory by birth, sympathies, training and early association, he called himself one.

Up to the development of the fell disease that sapped his strength, suddenly turning the fresh-coloured stalwart Yorkshireman into a decrepit, broken-spirited

invalid, he was a constant attendant on Parliamentary business. He did not often speak, but his speeches when delivered were listened to with close attention, new members and old, for varied reasons, being charmed with their antique style. Not a man of brilliant parts, he was thoroughly independent, absolutely honest in his prejudices, adding a certain quaint dignity to the modern manners of the House.

It was characteristic of him that in late years he strongly resented what he denounced as the hypocrisy of the performance repeated at the opening of every session of passing a Standing Order forbidding Peers of the Realm to take part in elections, seeing that their influence was overtly and covertly exercised without restraint.

A Prize Bull.

"Jemmy's" last appearance in the House was on the opening day of the present session, when he moved the omission of the Standing Order. I had some chat with him, and was shocked to find the change that had taken place since last we conversed on the eve of the prorogation. His broken spirit and faded strength were indicated by the fact that, contrary to habit, he did not insist on taking a division. He told me he was not sure he would be able to get through the business of "telling."

A couple of years ago the debate on this subject, opening at his instance, was made memorable by what some collectors regard as the best bull ever trotted out in the House of Commons. By way of illustrating his case, "Jemmy" mentioned how at a recent bye-election no less a person than the Lord Chancellor had interposed on behalf of the Ministerial candidate.

"The right hon. gentleman," said Sir W. Hart Dyke, following in debate, "has certainly surprised the House by his statement with regard to Lord Hals-

bury. He has gone to the top of the tree and caught a very large fish."

This delightful mixing of metaphors gained effect since it was not the effort of an Irish member but the work of an esteemed country gentleman who was for many years practically Minister of Education.

SESSION 1905

CHAPTER XXVII

REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS

Anxious Inquiries.—The Plan of Campaign.—The Government Majority.—Lord Hugh Cecil.

Feb. 14. Redistribution. THE King's Speech, read to-day by the Lord Chancellor, contains notification of intent to deal with the Redistribution of Seats. The method of making the question one of practical politics is truly Balfourian in its subtlety and dexterity. The ordinary way would be to introduce a Bill, and deal with it straight off. Such was the original intention. As a matter of fact, a Bill is actually in existence, perdu for the time in the Premier's desk in Downing Street. Only three weeks ago was born the happy thought of proceeding by resolution. It has, of course, the historic precedent created by Mr. Gladstone when he opened his campaign against the Established Church in Ireland. That is a detail.

The recommendation of the procedure in the eyes of Mr. Balfour is that, God willing, it will enable him not only to carry on through the present session, but make possible a working session in 1906. It was in May, 1868, Mr. Gladstone carried his Irish Church Resolution through the Commons. Its first result was the appointment of a Royal Commission, who occupied what remained of the session in investigating the question. In March of the following year a Bill based upon their report was introduced, and appropriated the rest of a

busy session. Mr. Balfour deliberately designs to adapt to the question of Redistribution the full course of Mr. Gladstone's procedure on the Irish Church Bill.

Anxious Inquiries.

But whilst Premiers propose the House of Commons disposes. Will Mr. Balfour, even with his majority of over eighty, manage to carry on even beyond Easter? That was the question on every lip as members crowded the lobby awaiting the opening of the session. It is noteworthy that whilst there days ago the majority of replies were in the negative, or at best doubtful, there is to-day sign of reversal of feeling, and a disposition to believe that, after all, the unexpected will happen, and Ministers will carry on to the usual date of adjournment in August. If the matter rested wholly upon the ordered action of the Ministerial majority the situation would be safe enough. Though rent in twain by the fissure of the fiscal controversy, Ministerialists still rally round the flag when it is threatened with capture by the Opposition set in battle array. Frontal attack on the Treasury Bench is as hopeless as it was at Spion Kop. But there is, and will be daily, hourly risk of the citadel being taken by surprise.

Feb. 17. The Plan of Campaign.

There are some Ministerialists who cheerily avow their belief that, if Parliament carries on through the present session, at the end of it nothing more will be heard of the cry for Tariff Reform. That may be a sanguine view whose paternity is discoverable in desire. Mr. Balfour's plan is childlike in its ingenuousness. We are to go on through this session incidentally carrying a Resolution affirming the desirability of redistributing electoral power. Next year is to be devoted to carrying a Redistribution Bill. In the autumn of 1906 there must of necessity follow a general election. Mr. Balfour and

Mr. Chamberlain admit the practical certainty of the result of the poll being the creation of a Liberal Government. Placed in office, it may remain there four years or fourteen. Accept the first figure and we reach the year of grace 1910. Then, according to Mr. Chamberlain's forecast, the Unionist Party will come back, clutched to the breast of a repentant country. Thereupon a Conference of Colonials will be summoned to consider a scheme of preferential tariffs between them and the mother country. The gathering of the clans from the utmost ends of the earth, the searching inquiry, the preparation of a momentous report, could scarcely be accomplished within the limits of twelve months. "Make it so," as Lord Selborne said when, on his recent official trip as First Lord of the Admiralty, the flag captain reported "twelve o'clock."

That brings us to the opening of the year 1912. In accordance with Mr. Balfour's genial and painstaking plan, the report of the Conference, assuming it to recommend a system of Preferential Tariffs, must be submitted to the constituencies, not only of Great Britain and Ireland, but of every colony concerned. Bang goes another year. In brief, assuming, as is here done, that everything falls out in accordance with the sanguine view of Mr. Chamberlain, eight years hence he, whether as Prime Minister or still cordially working under the command of his right hon. friend, will have the opportunity of bringing in a Bill establishing Preferential Tariffs for the Colonies.

Roughly speaking, Mr. Chamberlain, on mature consideration, whilst honestly convinced that the country is with him in his new departure in national finance, deliberately consents to postpone till his seventy-sixth birthday the initiation and accomplishment of a stupendous legislative task that will revolutionize a fiscal system upon which the country has waxed fat for nearly seventy years.

The Government Majority.

Meanwhile the division taken in the earliest moments of yesterday morning tends to strengthen the conviction mooted that Parliament will survive the ordinary term of the session. The majority less than half that which a little more than four years ago hailed Lord Salisbury's triumphant reinstalment to power. (Asquith's amendment on Address raising fiscal question was negatived by 311 votes against 248; Ministerial majority, 63.) It falls short by a score of the nominal Ministerial majority even after severe epidemic of bye-elections. 'Tis not so deep as a well nor so wide as a church door; but, like Mercutio's wound, 'tis enough, 'twill serve. It testifies afresh to the ineradicable habit of the Conservative mind to fall in behind its pastors and masters whatever it may think of their policy at a particular moment. It is probable that, as Lord Hugh Cecil calculates, if the question of Mr. Chamberlain's tariff reform were submitted to the Ministerial party in the House of Commons with official assurance that they might go as they pleased, it would be negatived by three to one. But, as Mr. Balfour said to a constituent yearning to know what he thought of the Ministerial defeat in North Dorset the other day, "we must take things as we find them."

At any time during the past eighteen months, had it been a Liberal Government who were in office in circumstances analogous to those that have embarrassed Mr Balfour, hon. gentlemen below the gangway on the Ministerial side would long ago have turned them out. With the Conservatives the habit of party loyalty is bred in the bone. Close association and a feeling of self-preservation have inoculated ex-Radicals of the 1885 epoch with similar sympathies.

These may be counted upon to prevail whenever, as this week, the Opposition pluck up courage to give battle royal on a vote of censure. Where danger

lies is in the nightly imminence of the Ministerial party being caught napping or dining. It is reported that the Premier has met this danger in advance by notifying that he will not go out on a snap division. For the head of the Constitutional party to have formed such a resolution is incredible. Attempt to carry it into practice would be unbearable, even for a Parliament that has seen many once sacred parliamentary traditions shattered by the hand of authority.

Lord Hugh Cecil.

Had it been possible to arrange the bargain Mr. Balfour might have been well content had his majority run down to a score on condition that Lord Hugh Cecil's speech remained unspoken. It is an article of belief with some old parliamentary hands that speeches delivered in the House of Commons have no effect upon practical politics. That is true in the main. The proverbial exception to rule is found in this particular case. Lord Hugh's speech to-night not only deeply moved the thronged audience that sat around him. It will stir the conscience of the country, and may possibly have an immediate effect upon the constitution and history of the Conservative party. The House of Commons admires courage and tactics. It looks on with good-humoured levity at dexterous manipulation of circumstance by high personages. But it is instantly moved by the speech even of an uncultured man, if the words breathe forth the spirit of unflinching truth and honest purpose.

Lord Hugh Cecil is implacable in his integrity, almost acrid in his reverence for truth. In addition he is one of the most polished, effective speakers known to the House of Commons. It is a long time since such effect has been created by the speech of a young private member as followed on his scathing denunciation of the tactics and the policy into connexion with which his not less gifted cousin has drifted.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE MACDONNELL INCIDENT

Sir Antony Macdonnell.—Scenes in the Commons.—Mr. George Wyndham.—Angered Ulster.—The King and the Irish Under-Secretary.—Mr. Wyndham Resigns.—Cracks in the Cabinet.—Fresh Scandal at the War Office.—A Manumitted Minister.—Jam not Satis.—Inexplicable Delay.

Feb. 22. Sir Antony Macdonnell.

EXPERIENCE of the first fortnight of the session has not been of the sort calculated to strengthen Mr. Balfour's patriotic intent of holding on till August. It was bad enough in the first week to have the old trouble about fiscal reform crop up. That was confronted and repelled by a loyal remnant of the once overwhelming majority responding to the summons to repel boarders flying the flag of a vote of censure. After the declaration of the division on Mr. Asquith's amendment it looked as if the House would settle down to ordinary work, and that all the Ministry had to fear was a snapped division. Suddenly, to the surprise of the English, who know curiously little of the domestic squabbles of Ireland, there was sprung upon the House this Antony Macdonnell business.

As the correspondence read to-night by Mr. Wyndham in a thronged, excited House testified, there was nothing politically or morally wrong in the inception of the affair. It is to Mr. Wyndham's credit that he should have frankly, hopefully accepted Sir Antony Macdonnell's services on the conditions laid down. When the post was offered him the new Under-

Secretary more than admitted, he insisted, that he was an Irishman, a Roman Catholic, and constitutionally bent on carrying out a Liberal policy in Ireland. To the impartial observer these personal conditions, combined with the administrative experience gained in the field of India, seemed to mark Sir Antony out as the very man for the post. To Mr. Wyndham's newly born and growing sympathies they strongly appealed.

Scenes in the Commons.

There is no doubt that in September, 1902, when Sir Antony Macdonnell came on the scene, Mr. Wyndham was passionately bent upon doing justice to Ireland. His Land Purchase Bill was the first fruit of his hope and endeavour. Encouraged by its success he, last autumn, got himself entangled in Lord Dunraven's scheme, which, under flimsiest of veils, proposed to give Home Rule to Ireland. But he forgot the Ulster member. After this week the lapse of memory is not likely to recur. In the House of Commons we have grown accustomed to see the Irish Nationalist member fling himself raving upon the Treasury Bench, and attempt (of course in Parliamentary sense) to rend the Chief Secretary limb from limb. I have chanced to be present at nearly every one of such scenes enacted during the last thirty years. I have not seen anything exceeding the virulent passion, the personal hatred, displayed this week by respectable-looking Ulster members denouncing a Unionist Chief Secretary, accused of having trafficked with the accursed thing, Home Rule.

Mr. George Wyndham.

It is not in respect of the birth of the episode that history will condemn the Chief Secretary. On broad grounds of statesmanship he is, apart from Ulster fanaticism, defensible up to the point of his return from his fateful holiday last autumn. On September 26 was published the Dunraven scheme

embodying—as the Viceroy and the Under-Secretary believed, with Mr. Wyndham's assent—administrative devolution and a decentralization of Irish finance. It broke over Ulster like a thunderclap. Discovering the depth of the precipice on whose verge he had been playing, the Chief Secretary made haste to dissociate himself from the scheme in the preparation of which his Under Secretary had prominently assisted under the "melancholy misunderstanding" that he had his chief's sympathy and authority. It was not exactly a heroic attitude. But Mr. Wyndham, hampered by sense of responsibility to the Cabinet, was justified in assuming it.

It is since the opening of Parliament that the action of the Chief Secretary has run counter to the higher traditions of public life, and the sensibilities of the House of Commons. The result is shown, not only in the division lobby but in the significant episode of Monday night, when, he rose amid chilling silence to defend himself, and resumed his seat, applauded only by the faintest cheer. With the best intention, under the purest impulse, he had made a mistake, in the sense that he embarked upon an undertaking in which his colleagues in the Cabinet dare not follow him. He accordingly, like the small boy found creeping through a hedge into the orchard, had to reconsider his position.

"Where are you going?" asked the angry owner, shaking his stick.

"I am going back again," said the small boy, reversing his attitude and his line of progress. Mr. Wyndham alarmed at the roar of Ulster, last September "went back again."

But what about his companions in the foray? They were two in number, the Viceroy and the Under-Secretary. As far as guilt is concerned—if guilt there be—Earl Dudley, by reason of his supreme position,

is far more amenable to reproof than is Sir Antony Macdonnell. Yet he is left unscathed and unscolded, whilst the Cabinet, earnestly protesting their admiration of Sir Antony as an Indian administrator, censure him as an Irish Under-Secretary. In common life the nearest approach to this procedure of an august body is seen in the Christmas pantomime, when, the street row plotted and conducted by the clown being at its noisiest height, enter a policeman who, ignoring the principal culprit, collars the smallest boy on the outside edge of the crowd and hales him to prison.

The bitter irony of the situation is seen in the circumstance that Mr. Wyndham was the agent selected to publicly pronounce censure on one whom Ulster lightly alludes to as "his accomplice." This, regarded in the mildest manner, is the very sublimity of blundering. The marvel to those acquainted with the chivalrous nature of the Chief Secretary is that it did not precipitate a course that, five months earlier, would have suggested itself to meaner minds. With the best intentions Mr. Wyndham has got into a mess. He attempted to drag himself out by writing a letter to the *Times* protesting a combination of innocence and ignorance. If any other Province of the Kingdom than Ulster had been concerned in the matter the affair might have been hushed up last September. The "melancholy misunderstanding" between Chief and Under-Secretary might privily have been explained away, and precautions taken against recurrence of accident.

Angered Ulster.

But Ulster is a sleuth-hound which, having once got its nose on the trail, does not uplift it except to spring on the fugitive. In well-informed quarters it is whispered that the appointment of "an Irishman, a Roman Catholic, and a Liberal in politics" was due, not to the initiative of the Chief Secretary or of Lord Lansdowne, but to an even more illustrious

quarter. However that be, Ulster, bitterly resenting it, has ever since had its eye on Sir Antony. It is recorded that when St Anthony dwelt in his cavern on the summit of Cavadonga he was "perpetually annoyed by devils." It would not be polite too closely to draw resemblance between the condition of Saint and Sir. Certainly the gentlemen of Ulster have not overstrained themselves in effort to make Sir Antony comfortable in the Irish Office. In their press and on the platform they have pursued him with innuendo and accusation. On the very first opportunity offered by the opening of Parliament, they drew from the Chief Secretary the painful statement that was equivalent to throwing the Under-Secretary to the wolves.

In the House of Commons there is discernible an undercurrent of feeling that, for his present reputation and his future career, the Chief Secretary would have done better had he resigned office, making room for some one else to read a censure upon a colleague whom, two years and a half ago, he "welcomed with gratitude and confidence."

Feb. 22. The King and the Irish Under-Secretary.

The bitterest thought in connexion with the Macdonnell incident is that the dilemma does not grow out of the Premier's initiative. Early in the week a report was circulated alleging that his Majesty had added a letter to the correspondence on the Macdonnell affair which Mr. Wyndham withheld from the knowledge of the House. Prompt contradiction followed from the King's Private Secretary. The report was inaccurate. But its promulgator had only got hold of the wrong end of the stick. The fact, well known in inner Ministerial circles, is that it was upon the King's personal recommendation that Sir Antony Macdonnell was inducted at the Irish Office, a powerful patronage that enabled him to make those special terms, disclosure

of which shocked the Ulster members, and have in less excitable quarters been denounced as unconstitutional.

Whilst yet Prince of Wales, His Majesty, taking note of the record and character of Colonel Bradford, at the time secretary in the Political and Secret Departments of the India Office, obtained his appointment as Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. This proved such an unqualified success that His Majesty, desirous of repeating it in the public interest, recommended another distinguished Indian officer and administrator for the vacant place at the Irish Office.

This was, of course, done with full knowledge of that tendency in Irish politics which is abhorrent to the Ulster man and welcome to the Nationalist. That was a further recommendation to His Majesty, the dearest wish of whose heart is to distinguish his reign by pacification of Ireland, an end he perceives can be achieved only by uprooting the ancient malign influence of Dublin Castle.

March 6. Mr. Wyndham Resigns.

Shortly after Mr. Wyndham carried the Land Purchase Bill of 1903, amidst salvos of applause from Irishmen of all sections temporarily united by a bribe of one hundred millions sterling pledged on the credit of the British taxpayer, he received a letter from a prominent much-esteemed member of the Dublin staff. It advised him to retire whilst the halo of success and popularity still shone on his head. He was warned that if he stayed on another two years all he had done for Ireland would be forgotten, and that he would drift into some difficulty that would break him, possibly permanently maim his career. Mr. Wyndham returned a light and confident answer, assuring his colleague that he had other good work to do for Ireland, and would remain at his post till it was accomplished. According to tradition at the Irish Office, his mentor endorsed the

letter, "Wyndham's a lost man," and put it away in the recesses of his desk.

The prophecy has been verified almost to a month. It was in pursuance of the intention in his mind when he wrote in reply to the warning that a year later the Chief Secretary entered into communication with

Mr. George Wyndham at Clouds.

Lord Dunraven, engaged in framing a scheme of devolution of local legislation and decentralization of financial arrangements. That was a step that drew upon him the implacable hatred of Ulster.

In the first round the brilliant Chief Secretary has been knocked out of the ring. Forced to publicly censure the colleague who, rightly or wrongly, believed he was acting in accordance with his chief's views, he

withdrew from the Parliamentary scene, leaving the Ulster men triumphant. He was in his place on Monday, with feverish irritation answering fresh questions about Sir Antony Macdonnell. On Tuesday morning he left town, for his father's residence, Clouds, and questions addressed to him were replied to by the Irish Attorney-General, who is as much out of sympathy with his generous broad views of Irish government as is that truculent Orangeman, the English Solicitor-General (Sir Edward Carson).

To-day Mr. Wyndham's resignation is announced in both Houses of Parliament.

March 13. Cracks in the Cabinet.

It is related in history how, when the nephew of Sol Gills was setting forth on his perilous voyage, Captain Cuttle presented him with his silver watch, "which was so big and so tight in his pocket that it came out like a bung." "Wal'r," said the Captain, "a parting gift, my lad. Put it back half an hour every morning and about another quarter towards the afternoon, and it's a watch that'll do you credit."

Reflection on the vicissitudes of Mr. Balfour's Cabinet recall this incident. If you get rid of four members in a batch one morning, on successive afternoons create vacancies at the Admiralty and the Irish Office, necessitating a reshuffling of seats, it's a Cabinet that will do any Premier credit. At the present moment there is pause in the process of reconstruction. We have not had a vacancy in the Cabinet for a whole week. It is true the unwonted interval has been filled by report of pending changes at the War Office. Mr. Arnold-Forster, appealed to on the subject by an anxious constituent, solemnly announces that so long as his country provides him work to do, and so long as he has, so to speak, a leg to stand upon, so long may Great Britain depend upon him.

March 15. Fresh Scandal at the War Office.

The lot of the Secretary of State for War is, truly, not a happy one. Sufficient for the day are the cares of the great Department which has its headquarters in Pall Mall, its pickets at all the ends of the earth. If Mr. Arnold-Forster, on first entering the War office, had found a clean slate on the desk, his task would have been sufficiently hard. But the War Secretary of to-day is inheritor of the amazing maladministration of predecessors. History presents no such bitter irony as disclosure of the state of the Army reached to-day under a Government which ten years ago came into office as the result of a surprise raid upon an Administration accused of lacking in store full supply of cordite. The tragi-comedy is completed when the multiform scandals disclosed in the report of the Auditor-General circulated this week were possible, were in fact accomplished, under the nose of the very statesman who carried the amendment in Committee of Supply that ten years ago bundled C.-B. out of the War Office and evicted Lord Rosebery from Downing Street.

A Manumitted Minister.

Mr. Brodrick has gone to the India Office in control of his old friend, George Curzon, a little joke more in consonance with Disraeli's grim humour than with Mr. Balfour's polished banter. For the Secretary of State this is a happy change. Time was when he was daily put to the torture at question time by a throng of infuriated inquirers wanting to know all kinds of inconvenient things about the army in the field in South Africa, and the administration of its affairs in Pall Mall. Now Mr. Brodrick may saunter in at question time or stay away an' he pleases. His most terrible inquisitor is Mr. Samuel Smith ; his most redoubtable critic Mr. Herbert Roberts. After life's fitful fever at the War Office he sleeps well in the palatial mansion in the courtyard by Downing Street,

his slumbers stirred only by apprehension of what George Curzon may say about his interference in Tibet. After three years' struggle with worse than beasts at Ephesus gentle Fortune has led him into a position where he has time to read again the companion of his early youth, and hug himself on the peace that at eventide comes to him as it came to Beattie's *Hermit.*

> At the close of the day, when the hamlet is still
> And mortals the sweets of forgetfulness prove ;
> When nought but the torrent is heard on the hill,
> And nought but the nightingale's heard in the grove.

Jam not Satis.

Which thing is an allegory. As a matter of fact, what Mr. Brodrick, judiciously seated in the obscurity of the lower end of the Treasury Bench, heard this afternoon, was the clattering of a million jam tins discovered to contain only 12 ounces of fruit instead of the full pound weight contracted and paid for. The circumstance that the noise hurtled over the head of Mr. Arnold-Foster, leaning against the table, pale, trembling, almost speechless, added piquancy to the situation. Only for the grace of God St. John Brodrick would at that moment have stood in the hapless War Minister's place, ineffectively trying not to explain anything. Of all the deliberate, iniquitous meannesses practised by contractors since war began this diddling Tommy Atkins out of 25 per cent. of his beloved jam is perhaps the worst. But if there are in the world ghouls capable of such infamy, there is also a Secretary of State for War, with a numerous, autocratic, costly staff who are understood to see that the Army, fighting in a far-off field, shall enjoy unadulterated and undiminished the stores the taxpayer cheerfully provides.

It would be gross injustice to the Cook-general in the humblest household to suppose that twice in succession the neighbouring grocer could pass off upon her a tin of gooseberry jam invoiced at the weight of

16 ounces, actually containing only twelve. To err is human, even in the kitchen. She might have been taken in once; but not twice. Consider this supply of 1,350,816 tins passing under the eyes, through the hands of an army of highly paid inspectors, each can purporting to hold a pound weight of jam, really containing only three-quarters of a pound. Alleged shortage of cordite at a particular date is not in it with this colossal carelessness, which finds its parallel in other instances cited by this terrible Auditor-General.

Inexplicable Delay.

Except the business management of the War Office nothing could be worse than the manner in which the affair was dealt with at the table of the House of Commons. Mr. Arnold-Forster is in no way responsible for the original sin. At the time it was committed, and overlooked by the guardians of the comfort of the Army, he was a private member, engaged in the more congenial and easier task of criticizing War Office policy and methods. It is not his funeral, though it may prove to be a long step in the direction of hastening that ceremony. Where his responsibility begins is with receipt of the Auditor-General's communication indicating the fraud. He admitted in short answers to pointed questions that, though details of the charges were received ten months ago, it is only within the last four weeks that, by his directions, inquiry has been instituted.

This admission is even more depressing than the successful fraud of the enterprising jam contractor. Here is disclosure of a stupendous infamy, made by a Government official. It duly reaches Pall Mall, is possibly read, and with a yawn placed in the pigeon-hole. Only when the Auditor-General's report appears in proof in Parliamentary papers, with the certainty that the harmless little incident will be made much of in the House of Commons, is inquiry instituted and, as Mr. Arnold-Forster pleaded, "is still proceeding."

CHAPTER XXIX

MINISTERIAL STAMPEDES

The Cheshire Cat in Politics.—An Embarrassing Motion. —Flight.—Another Stampede.—"Not Classified." —The Strange Case of Sir Carne Rasch.—Disappeared.—Conclusive Testimony.

March 22. The Cheshire Cat in Politics.

When in Wonderland Alice came upon the Cheshire Cat she was irritated by its habit of interrupting conversation by sudden disappearance. At the outset the vanishing process began at the rear, extending the full length of the body, till, as Alice observed, there was nothing left of the Cheshire Cat but its grin. With that frankness of comment that endeared her to all she met Alice complained of this tendency. Whereupon the Cheshire Cat, ever ready to oblige, began to disappear at the head, there being, finally, nothing in view but its tail.

The bearings of these observations lie in the application thereof, which is obvious. To-night the Unionist party in the House of Commons, faced by an embarrassing resolution on the fiscal question, disappeared, the head vanishing first in the person of the Premier leading his colleagues on the Treasury Bench forth behind the Speaker's chair, the tail being represented by those eminent senators the Member for Central Finsbury (Mr. Mainwaring) and the Member for Peckham (Sir F. Banbury).

Almost it was left to Mr. Massey Mainwaring to be the solitary ultimate tip of the tail. It was by miscal-

culation of resources that Sir Frederick Banbury was entrapped. His intention had been to remain long enough to call upon the Speaker to exercise his privilege of inviting the minority on Mr. Ainsworth's resolution to stand up in their places and be counted. As soon as the anticipated consent was forthcoming Sir Frederick meant to scuttle out by the nearest doorway, leaving in the lurch that more guileless child of nature, Mr. Massey Mainwaring. But Peckham proposes and the rules governing divisions dispose. Before the Speaker put the question the doors were locked, and Sir Frederick discovered that, like the caged starling that moved to pity the gentle heart of Sterne, he "couldn't get out." So, avoiding the uneasy glance of the other half of the Unionist party, he, with studiously casual air, returned to his place, and presently marched into the division lobby.

For the first time in ten years Mr. Herbert Gladstone, acting as Whip for the Opposition, returning to the table after a party division, had the paper handed to him by the Clerk in token that he represented the majority. He did full justice to the opportunity. "The Ayes to the right," he said, "were 254. The Noes"—here a dramatic pause—"Two."

The minority were Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. Massey Mainwaring, who had lingered too long.

It is thirty years since there was a scene in the House of Commons parallel to that which hereupon filled the Chamber with Homeric laughter. On April 23, 1875, Dr. Kenealy moved for a Royal Commission to inquire into the conduct of the Judges in the Tichborne case. In the division he found a co-teller in Mr. Whalley. The majority trooped into the No lobby, and there was much curiosity to learn how many and who might have gone the other way. Sir William Dyke, happily still with us, who played his part as one of the Government tellers, will not forget how his

grave, almost saturnine colleague, Mr. Winn, was punctilious in the grammatical accuracy with which he announced the result.

"The Aye to the right is 1; the Noes to the left are 433."

The Aye to the right was the incomparable Major O'Gorman, who emerged from the lobby mopping his head and blowing like a porpoise. Asked why he should have supported the resolution, the massive major explained "It's very hot. I knew the No lobby would be crowded and that I would have all the other to myself."

An Embarrassing Motion.

To-night it was "very hot" for Mr. Balfour. It cannot be said he evaded the inconvenience with the unqualified success that attended the manœuvre of Major O'Gorman. To tell the truth, it would be difficult to find in the record of the last fifty years a great party, nominally in possession of a commanding majority, figuring in equally ludicrous circumstances. It is true Ministers and their men were in a tight place. But that is a prized opportunity for a Heaven-born leader. The Opposition in framing the Resolution of which Mr. Ainsworth took charge displayed the skill of old Parliamentary hands. Their object was, as Mr. Balfour complained, to embarrass the Government. For nearly two years they have been endeavouring to obtain from the Premier a definite statement of his views on Mr. Chamberlain's declared policy on the tariff question. As he pleads, he has repeatedly met the challenge, once with the assistance of half a sheet of note-paper. The Opposition have persistently protested that his painstaking efforts at explicitness have been a failure.

Here at last was an opportunity complete in its range. In one of his earlier speeches, before a succes-

sion of bye-elections suggested caution, Mr. Chamberlain boldly declared in favour of imposing on all manufactured goods imported into this country a general duty not exceeding an average of 10 per cent. This passage in his speech was cannily embodied in Mr. Ainsworth's Resolution, and Mr. Balfour and the Unionist party were invited to vote Aye or No upon the issue raised. Truly a quandary for a statesman whose agile elusiveness had through two sessions been the admiration of mankind. Three weeks ago a similar pitfall was crossed by the bridge of the Previous Question. The measure of success consequent thereon was, however, not large enough to justify repetition of the tactics. If Mr. Balfour voted for the Resolution which declared a Protectionist policy injurious to the commercial interests of the United Kingdom it would lead to final rupture of his relations with Mr. Chamberlain, already strained by Government patronage extended to Lord Hugh Cecil in his candidature at Greenwich. In face of his repeated declaration against the imposition of such a tax he could not declare in its favour. There was left only one resource. It was that which suggested itself to the Cheshire Cat at inconvenient turns in the conversation with the too curious Alice. He must disappear.

Flight.

In the history of war there is the well-known case of the captain who

> Fled full soon on the first of June
> And bade the rest keep fighting.

Mr. Balfour did not thus discriminate. Interposing at the earliest moment, he announced his intention of walking out before the division and invited his followers to imitate his example. Courteous to the last, he remained to hear the vigorous speech C.-B. delivered across the table. Then, with smiling countenance, languorous grace, and lingering step, he

fared forth, followed in single file by his colleagues on the Treasury Bench. Simultaneously a strategic movement to the rear was made by the rank and file of the party, their steps hastened by the fact that Sir Howard Vincent, in a white waistcoat and a loud voice, had commenced what threatened to be a long speech.

March 30. Another Stampede.

Last night, Ministerialists again absented themselves, a resolution denouncing the Premier's fiscal policy of retaliation was carried *nemine contradicente*. On the meeting of the House to-day Mr. Winston Churchill, with amiable intent of rubbing salt into the wound, asked the Premier what he proposed to do in the matter. Would he move to expunge the record from the Journals of the House, or would it remain there? In the latter case did he think it consonant with his public duty and his private honour to continue the leadership of the House?

The little scene that followed demonstrated afresh how grievous a loss the comedy stage has suffered since Mr. Balfour determined to devote himself to politics. The situation was grave and unprecedented. A Ministry which, less than five years ago, came into power with a majority approaching seven score, who still command one of more than seventy, had suffered infliction of a vote of censure unanimously passed and entered on the Journals. It was reasonable to expect that the person most directly concerned in the matter, the Prime Minister, would, in whatever place of retreat he hid his diminished head, have made arrangements for learning at the earliest possible moment the issue of the night's proceedings. Failing that, there were the morning newspapers, each from its own standpoint describing and discussing the momentous Parliamentary incident.

As Mr. Churchill read the terms of his elaborate inquiry, Mr. Balfour, looked up with quickening interest. "What! what!" as George III used to say. Had something happened in the House last night? How extremely interesting! Mr. Churchill alluded to the Journal of the House as recording the event. A sort of daily paper, Mr. Balfour surmised. He never read daily papers, but must, really, make exception in this case. An obliging colleague produced a copy of the Journal and handed it to the Premier, who studied with undisguised interest the passage pointed out to him. How very annoying of Winston Churchill, with the headlong habit of youth, thus to spring a mine upon him.

"If," he said, "the hon. gentleman had taken the ordinary course of giving me notice of the question, I would have made myself acquainted with *what appears to have taken place last night.*"

April 14. "Not Classified."

Humour is not Mr. Chamberlain's strong point. But in tabulating the Unionist party on the tariff question he emitted a flash that delights the House of Commons. He reckons that of whole-hoggers he may count upon 171, in itself a surprise. Of Unionists who would be out-and-out in favour of his proposals if they were adopted by the Government he counts up 71, a calculation under which must necessarily lie bold assumption. In favour of Retaliation there are 100, less one. Free Fooders muster a poor 27; while of Unionists not classified, "including the Prime Minister," there are four.

On the whole, this beat Mr. Balfour's own classical admission that on the question of tariff reform he has "no settled convictions." But that was a long time ago, when the question was still coming to the front, and a wary statesman might be forgiven if before committing himself he desired to hear it argued out.

To-day nearly two years have sped since Mr. Chamberlain opened his campaign. In home politics Fiscal Reform has played the part of Aaron's rod, swallowing up all others. It has been the topic on every political platform. Upon it a long series of bye-elections have been fought. The Unionist party has been rent in twain, and Mr. Balfour's Cabinet has gone to pieces. In such circumstances for the Prime Minister, of all men, to stand apart in a condition of nebulous indecision is an unprecedented phenomenon. He has grown accustomed to be twitted with it by hon. and right hon. gentlemen opposite. To be publicly labelled as "not classified" by his own familiar friend is the unkindest cut of all.

May 19. The Strange Case of Sir Carne Rasch. The usefulness of Sir Carne Rasch's Parliamentary career has been checked, if not absolutely blighted, by a strange circumstance. A short time ago, to the general regret, he was stricken down by an attack of illness that confined him to his room. One night Sir Gilbert Parker, determined to sacrifice the period of contented rest advised by the Faculty to be enjoyed after a good dinner, patriotically resolved to return to the House of Commons. Shortly after his arrival, looking round the familiar scene, his eye fell upon the figure of the Member for Mid-Essex seated in his accustomed place. Surprised that he should be out at a time when he was reported to be confined to his bed, Sir Gilbert, desirous of encouraging habit of self-sacrifice in that direction, tipped him a friendly nod. He felt a certain creepy sensation running up and down his spine when, instead of the hearty response customary from the genial baronet, he was conscious of a pair of glassy eyes fixed upon him, one slowly revolving with persistency that seemed to indicate desire to convey an important message.

This was uncomfortable, not to say uncanny. But there were several members about; the Serjeant-at-Arms was in the chair; one or two policemen were on duty in the lobby. Plucking up his courage, Sir Gilbert leaned across the gangway that separated him from the Baronet, and, affecting a light, trivial manner, congratulated him upon his return to the House. A ghastly countenance was turned upon him. The glassy eye he had noticed as revolving in response to his nod—it was the left one—stopped, and the other moved with precisely the same action. Otherwise there was no response. Sir Gilbert thought he would go home. He had often heard of "a speaking eye." A first acquaintance with the phenomenon was not exhilarating.

Disappeared!

Possibly, had the matter stopped there Sir Gilbert Parker would have said nothing about it. There are some episodes of the post-prandial day which the frivolous-minded are apt to misconstrue. On the following afternoon there came to him unexpected confirmation of his first strong impression. Sir H. Meysey-Thompson had also seen Sir Carne Rasch in his place, had approached him with friendly intent to congratulate him on his convalescence, when, to his amazement, the figure vanished. Following its upward course, Sir Henry distinctly saw a wreath of smoke disappear through the cornice of the roof to the right of the Speaker's chair, part of the elaborate ventilating apparatus by which exhausted air escapes from the legislative Chamber.

On a historic occasion Sir Henry James, having moved a resolution censuring the import duty of five per cent. on Indian cotton goods, Mr. Chamberlain, entering the division lobby, managed to emerge without taking part in an embarrassing division. Much ado was made about the nothing.

Mr. Speaker Peel consulted upon it, delivered oracular judgment.

"To my knowledge," he said, "members have gone into the lobby and they did not always come out of the lobby."

Sir Carne Rasch had come into the House, for Sir H. Meysey-Thompson had seen him seated there. Now, with equal certainty, he had gone out of it.

Sir Henry was so impressed with this aërial feat that, desirous of thinking the matter over in the cool of the morning, he made a note of it. Coming by chance upon Sir Gilbert Parker, moved by a subtle impulse not the least notable incident in a supernatural affair, they simultaneously began to relate their experience. This is odd enough. But a stranger thing followed. Sir Gilbert Parker is by instinct and profession a romancer. Sir H. Meysey-Thompson, according to his own frank confession, had, before he returned to the House, been reading over his after-dinner cigar *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. He was just in the mood for anything happening at the psychological moment when the candle went out. None of the reflections suggested by these personal circumstances apply to Sir Arthur Hayter. He is, perhaps, the very last man in the House of Commons likely to see a ghost. Sometime Financial Secretary to the War Office, for three years Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, author of a luminous work on *Production and its Increase*, no spook with the slightest vestige of intelligence would attempt to try it on with *him*.

Conclusive Testimony.

And yet Sir Arthur Hayter saw the astral body of Sir Carne Rasch, Bart., M.P., at a time when that interesting invalid was reported to be on his sick bed. And, mark you, this was in the afternoon, a reasonable time having elapsed since light luncheon was partaken of. Sir Arthur

Hayter, moreover, brings into the box with him a witness of undoubted repute. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman may possibly have visions about Home Rule. But he is not the kind of Scotchman to see spooks in the House of Commons without there being—if the paradox be permitted—some foundation for the apparition. Seated on the Front Bench, the Leader of the Opposition had his attention called by the ex-Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee to the Member for Mid Essex, not in his accustomed place, as might have been expected if he were in the flesh, but below the gangway. Sir Arthur, noting that the person showed on his exceptionally pallid countenance traces of recent illness, expressed surprise that he should in the circumstances have ventured to return to his Parliamentary duties. Instantly the practical mind of C.-B. took into account a material bearing of the case.

An Astral Figure.

"I hope," he said, "his illness is not catching."

There spoke the practical philanthropist, the chivalrous adversary. Assuming that a too early mingling with his fellow men on the part of one risen from a sick bed might convey the seeds of contagion, occu-

pants of the Front Opposition Bench were not personally concerned. The palisade of Party and the width of the floor separated them from the area of danger. But Sir Carne Rasch at the moment this conversation took place was in close contiguity with the seats of Mr. Chaplin, Sir Trout Bartley, a group of Ulster men, nay, even of Mr. Chamberlain himself. Pardonably desirous of seeing the Ministerial majority diminished by ordinary agencies, such as bye-elections, C.-B. shrank from catastrophe made possible by the presence of a disinfected invalid.

These are the plain facts of a strange case that has through the week engrossed the attention of the House of Commons to the neglect of the Budget Bill. It is obvious enquiry cannot rest here. In the absence of an official body suitable for undertaking investigation, the Psychical Society should devote their trained intelligence to its elucidation. Meanwhile Sir Carne Rasch's life in the House of Commons is made unendurable. A patient man, always willing to oblige, he could stand the flood of inquiry and cross-examination that daily besets him. What he objects to as insufferable is the habit members have of furtively, with extended forefinger, prefacing conversation by poking him in the ribs, touching him on the arm or other accessible portion of an unmistakable fleshy body. The action betokens a feeling of distrust irritating to a high-spirited man.

CHAPTER XXX

CHINESE LABOUR

Mr. Balfour as a Man of War.—The Long and Short of a Speech.—An Outburst.—The Voice of Ireland is Heard.—The Criminal in the Dock.—Cherche Chamberlain.—The Retiring Speaker.—Sir Antony Macdonnell.—The Irish Land Act.—Forcing Mr. Balfour's Hand.

May 11. Mr. Balfour as a Man of War.

THAT the Premier took a special interest in the work of the Defence Committee is a fact not unfamiliar to the House. It has, indeed, been habitually made the subject of gentle chaff by Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman and others. Certainly the Prime Minister's personal appearance and manner do not irresistibly suggest the man of war. There is something incongruous in the idea of his presiding over a Board of Military and Naval Council, charged with the task of preserving by force of arms the safety of the empire. This afternoon the crowded house, listening in silent amazement, discovered in him an absolute master of the naval and military situation at home and abroad, a pellucidly clear exponent of its intricacies.

The statement in the form presented came as a surprise. The vote for the salary of the Secretary of the Defence Committee cropping up in the Civil Service Estimates, it was recognized that the opportunity was convenient for making a few remarks promised some time ago. Nothing more was looked for than some cut-and-dried observations for whose lack of precise

information the necessity of guarding national secrets would be pleaded. When Mr. Balfour rose the House was by no means full. Members gathered in anticipation of an ordinary dull sitting devoted to discussion of the distribution of shillings and pence in the most miscellaneous of Estimates. What it found itself treated to was a statement full in detail, positive in purpose, Bismarckian in bluntness, imperial in range of interest.

The Premier was conscious that his audience spread far beyond the circle of members listening with breathless attention, loth to break the thread of the discourse by a cheer. Outside all the nations of the world were within hearing, whilst not defiantly, without a touch of blatancy, in quiet, business-like manner, he demonstrated the inviolability of these islands from invasion, and quashed the bogey of Russian descent on India. Not since Mr. Gladstone uttered the stern command, "Hands off, Austria!" has a responsible British statesman given such plain warning to an avowedly friendly nation as Mr. Balfour conveyed to Russia in the matter of attempting to build strategic railways in Afghanistan. If would, he quietly said, be regarded as an act of direct aggression.

May 22. The Long and the Short of a Speech.

Alfred Lyttelton, Secretary of State for the Colonies, has beaten the Parliamentary record. In the longest time he has made the briefest speech ever delivered by a Minister of the Crown standing at the table of the House of Commons. It consisted of three words:

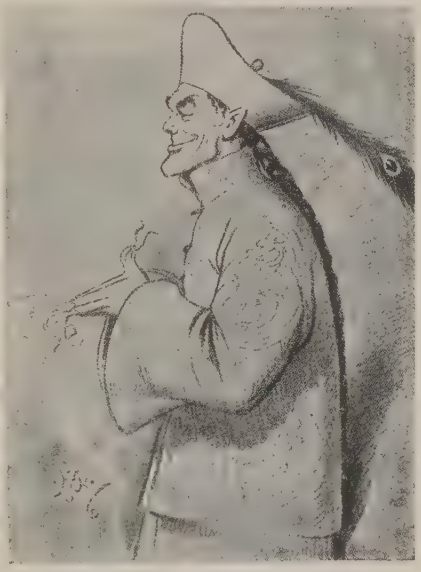
"The Prime Minister——"

He followed, in due course, the Leader of Opposition, who moved the adjournment with intent to extract from the Premier declaration of his latest attitude on the fiscal question. C.-B., rising promptly at nine

o'clock, spoke for twenty-five minutes. His address, reasonable in spirit, moderate in tone, was in no wise responsible for what followed.

"All we want," he said, regarding Mr. Balfour with persuasive mien, "is a plain simple answer to a plain simple question."

There was a pause whilst the Deputy-Speaker read the terms of the motion submitted. All eyes in a now crowded House were turned upon the Premier, lolling with studied negligence on Treasury Bench. It was naturally expected he would promptly rise to reply. It was his affair solely and personally. He made no move, and the Colonial Secretary, appearing at the table, laid on the brass-bound box notes of a speech to preparation of which he had sacrificed his dinner.



"Secretary of State for the Colonies."

An Outburst. A moment of dumb amazement followed. The House is accustomed by this time to Mr. Balfour's cavalier ways, his airy disregard of precedent and conventionalities. This was too much. Before Mr. Lyttelton could open his mouth an angry roar burst from crowded ranks of Opposition.

"Balfour! Balfour!" they cried.

Mr. Lyttelton looked round with appealing look. Then he began and ended his speech.

"The Prime Minister——" he said.

The roar of "Balfour!" rising with tornadic force silenced him. He stood for full five minutes facing the music. John Ellis, custodian of Parliamentary privilege, rose from a back bench behind Opposition leaders. It was now the turn of the country gentlemen, and they sustained their ancient reputation.

"Order, order!" they bellowed, "Lyttelton! Lyttelton!"

After vain effort, Mr. Ellis resumed his seat, hoarse and baffled. He might as well have shrieked remonstrance to Niagara tumbling over its cliff. Mr. Lyttelton again appeared at the wicket. The Opposition, having had a useful couple of minutes' rest whilst Ministerialists took up the shouting, resumed with fresh vigour.

"Balfour! Balfour!" they roared. Mr. Lyttelton stood mute at the table, with elbow resting on the brass-bound box that in days gone by Gladstone used to thump.

"Speak up!" shouted Mr. Flavin. "We can't hear a word you are saying."

Which was true.

Mr. Winston Churchill proposing to offer a few remarks, the Ministerialists again took their innings, the Opposition gratefully resting. After battling for a while with the storm Winston invented a new procedure in debate. Stepping down to the Chair, he bent over the Deputy-Speaker and shouted his remarks in his ear This done he, amid wild howls from Unionists, returned to his seat.

With the automatic precision of the figures alternately issuing from either weather box to forecast Sunshine or Storm, Mr. Lyttelton once more appeared at the table. It turned out to be storm.

Mr. Lyttelton's Short Speech.

The Voice of Ireland is Heard.

The Irish members, taking charge of the performance, gave a new turn to the shouting. It is a long time since Mr. Flavin spent such a happy evening. With recollection of a memorable occasion when he was carried forth on the shoulders of four policemen, his compatriots escorting him singing "God save Ireland," the interference of the police seemed most appropriate to the occasion. Accordingly, at the top of a voice that rose above the whirlwind, he yelled "Police! Police!"

Another Irish member of military tendency insisted on sending for the Horse Guards. Still another, in mournful voice indicating a sorely stricken soul, moaned, "And this is the Mother of Parliaments!"

"Police! Police!" responded Mr. Flavin with freshened energy, as if the idea had just occurred to him.

In turn Lord Hugh Cecil and C.-B. attempted to mediate. The latter added fuel to the fire.

"This incident," he said, "has made quite plain——"

"Your d——d bad manners," shouted a Unionist, obligingly filling up the sentence.

This breach of Parliamentary decorum suggested to Mr. Flavin an appropriate moment for again crying aloud for the police.

The Criminal in the Dock.

It was ten minutes past ten. The scene and the shouting had been incessant for full forty minutes. The Premier, responding to appeal made by the Leader of Opposition, at length rose. His appearance at the table was hailed with triumphant shout from the Opposition. Comparative silence reigned whilst he deprecated as absurd, unworkable, the demand that he should immediately follow C.-B.

"It is," he said, "not consistent with usage or ideas of justice that the criminal in the dock—and that is the situation I am supposed to occupy—should

offer his defence before he has heard the whole of the accusation."

This said he sat down, and the Colonial Secretary, with the now familiar automatic movement, emerged on the scene. He stood at the box as before. With renewed vehemence a hearing was refused him.

At the end of the first half-hour John Burns suggested, in the interests of the dignity of the House, that the Deputy-Speaker, in accordance with the Standing Order added after the free fight on the Home Rule Bill, should close the scene by forthwith adjourning the House. Mr. Lowther (J. W.) admitted his mind had turned in that direction, but he was loth precipitately to take unprecedented action.

Another half-hour sped; the fingers of the clock pointed to half-past ten. The Colonial Secretary still at the table, dumb amid the uproar. For the fifth time he made his succinct speech.

"The Prime Minister——" he said.

The angry roar burst forth again; with fixed sickly smile Mr. Lyttelton surveyed the turbulent scene. Plainly there was no hope of cessation on other terms than surrender by the Premier. He, with gallant attempt to lighten with familiar smile a countenance flushed with anger, stretched his slim form with affected ease on the Treasury Bench.

Evidently there was no yielding there. Equally plain that the Opposition were good for another hour and a half's shouting. At midnight relief would come by automatic adjournment of the debate. Meanwhile, in the present temper of House, worse things might happen. The Deputy-Speaker accordingly, citing the new rule, declared the sitting suspended. With a mighty shout the crowded assembly leaped up and surged forth through the shamed glass doors.

"This will be a lesson for Arthur," said a jubilant Liberal.

"Possibly," replied a meditative Ministerialist. "But, you see, after all he got his own way. You moved the adjournment in the hope of extracting from him a damaging statement. You insisted on his making it at a particular moment. He declined. Then we had a scene that finds parallel only in the riot we kicked up when in 1893 Mr. G. proposed to closure the Home Rule Bill in Committee. And now we are going home without Arthur's having said a word explanatory of his present attitude on the fiscal question. It's been a lively game. But honours, such as they are, are easy."

May 23. Cherche Chamberlain.

In cases of danger or difficulty besetting mankind the French say "Cherche la femme." In all cases of exceptional violence in the House of Commons it is safe to look out for Mr. Chamberlain. He was, of course, undesignedly and involuntarily, at the bottom of last night's business.

Before the House adjourned for the week-end it was understood that his confabulation with the Premier had resulted in a *via media* that would prevent the threatened open disruption. Up to so recent a period as ten days ago, Mr. Balfour never varied from the attitude assumed in his Edinburgh speech. He then definitely, categorically, pledged himself to a line of conduct that would necessitate two general elections before attempt was made to legislate in favour of preferential tariffs. Mr. Chamberlain publicly protested against what was generally recognized as an effort to shelve him and his scheme by lapse of time. Mr. Balfour made no response, the position being reasserted in debate in the House of Lords by the Duke of Marlborough, and that far more important Minister, Lord Lansdowne.

An answer given to a question in the House of Commons last Thursday indicated a change of front

on this crucial point. No doubt existed that Mr. Balfour had halved the difference with the ex-Colonial Secretary, making legislative action possible after one election instead of two. It was with the avowed object of clearing up this matter that last night " C.-B." moved the adjournment of the debate, with the lively consequences recorded.

May 30. The Retiring Speaker.

Mr. Gully's resignation of the Speakership is in some quarters as disconcerting as in all it is unexpected. I hear from a private quarter that the step was resolved upon within the last ten days, upon assurance that Parliament will meet again next session. Had there been reasonable prospects of a general election taking place this year Mr. Gully would have held on. But he did not feel able to face the prospect of another session.

The illness which some weeks ago withdrew him from his post and sent him down to his seaside residence, has been greatly aggravated during the last fortnight by irritation consequent on the scenes in the House. He could not resist the feeling that the absence of the Speaker from the chair at such a juncture was detrimental to the interests of the House and inconsistent with the duty of the incumbent of the post. It was in this mood, and in view of the prospect indicated, that Mr. Gully suddenly and, as his friends think, wisely resolved forthwith to anticipate a step that would in any case have accompanied the dissolution of the present Parliament.

June 1. Sir Antony Macdonnell.

Sir Antony Macdonnell is in London just now, having come up for the levée and other social duties. Whilst he is by no means disposed to air his grievances suffered by instigation of the Ulster Orangemen, should the topic crop up at the dinner-table, he does not shirk it or lack frankness in discussing it. Watching his face as he talks, it is

easy to understand how tough has been the job of his Majesty's Ministers to whose lot fell the duty of obeying the dictum of the Ulster men and trying to hound him out of the Irish Office. There is something in his keen, resolute regard, the way his square jaw sets when the subject of transference to another post is mentioned, that enable one to realize the discomfiture of the Ministerial emissary. Mr. Walter Long, the

No Muzzle.

new Irish Secretary, with all his practice at the Board of Agriculture will find it hard to muzzle this Irish setter.

Twice in the earlier stages of his career as Under-Secretary for Ireland Sir Antony offered to resign. At that time, however, Ulster resentment had not blazed forth, and the Chief Secretary (Mr. Wyndham),

recognizing the superb capacity of his colleague, would not listen to the suggestion. When the storm burst he was offered the Governorship of Bombay. It was a great temptation, being, as he confesses, the promotion he most coveted. But he felt that, in spite of the painfulness of a position created by official ostracism and virulent personal attack, he could still do useful work for Ireland.

So he stays in Dublin, and has no present intention of quitting the Under Secretary's Lodge, even though Mr. Walter Long be his neighbour at the Viceregal Lodge.

The Irish Land Act.

Sir Antony had much to do with the conception and drafting of the Irish Land Act, whose efficiency, made possible it is true by a huge responsibility laid on the shoulders of the British taxpayer, is working wonders in Ireland. As it created opening for some excellent bargains on the part of the Irish landlords, nothing was heard in Ulster in the way of resentment of the energetic Under Secretary. But when, having gratified the landlords, he proposed, with the connivance of a Unionist Government, to give the people of Ireland something like Home Rule, past favours were forgotten and a dead-set made against him.

The crisis which led to the resignation of Mr. Wyndham was brought to a head with that grim, relentless decision that marks the Irish character. Mr. Balfour numbers among his colleagues five men who, in this twentieth century, preserve towards Ireland something of the old Cromwellian feeling. They are the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Lord Ashbourne; the President of the Board of Education, the Marquis of Londonderry; the Secretary of State for War, Mr. Arnold-Forster; the Solicitor-General, Sir Edward Carson; and the Attorney-General for Ireland, Mr. Atkinson.

Forcing Mr. Balfour's Hand. This group formed the lever with which Ulster dislodged George Wyndham and has since manœuvred round the sturdy figure of Sir Antony Macdonnell. In obedience to a mandate from their constituencies, such of these Ministers as had seats in the Commons resolved to resign if Mr. Wyndham retained office as Chief Secretary. The ultimatum was joined in by Lord Ashbourne and Lord Londonderry and presented to Mr. Balfour.

The hapless Premier, recognizing that such wholesale secession would make impossible another reconstruction of his Ministry, capitulated. His brilliant colleague, his long-time personal friend, the Chief Secretary, was thrown to the dogs, who snarled impotently around the kennel from which the Under Secretary for Ireland still serenely regards them.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE NEW SPEAKER

Speaker Gully.—Speaker Peel.—Supplementary Questions.—Election of Speaker.—Mr. Lowther Proposed.—The Speaker Elect.—In the Chair.—Not too Old at Seventy.—Their Longest Stride.—A Grand Old Peer.—Lord Elcho in the Commons.—Eighty-seven.—The Butler Report.—Humanity Staggered.—Ambiguous.—Prorogation.—Mr. Balfour.—Parliamentary Apprenticeship.—Premier.—Adroit.

June 7. Speaker Gully. MR. GULLY for the last time seated himself in the chair in wig and gown, to take farewell of an assembly in which through ten years he has been a dignified figure. The familiar story of his career as Speaker is comforting to any apprehensive of irreparable loss by the shifting circumstance of human life. When Mr. Peel stepped down from the chair for the last time the House was *désolé*. Never more, it was said, shall we look upon his like again. Literally that was true. Like all great men, Mr. Peel's personality was his own. But Mr. Gully's term of Speakership, in equal measure marked by individuality, loftily upheld the traditions of the Chair ennobled by his predecessor's magnificent manner. A constitutional urbanity of manner habitually presented the sword of authority sheathed. When, necessary the blade was withdrawn and smote with force and precision.

The Speakership of the House of Commons is, per-

Farewell !

haps, of all public positions the most arduous. The fact that, save by the extreme course of a Resolution, there is no appeal from the Speaker's judgment, invests the post with fullest measure of responsibility. He is called upon, often without a moment's notice, to decide upon delicate, intricate points. He must have at his finger ends not only the written, but the unwritten, law of Parliamentary procedure. It is the almost invariable habit of tumultuous scenes to burst on the Commons without premonition. Thus it was a fortnight ago when Mr. Balfour, personally charged with certain Parliamentary grave offences, put up the hapless Colonial Secretary to reply to the indictment. After a moment of mute amazement, the soporific surface of the House broke into uproar.

Speaker Peel.

Lord Peel had unique experience of the pitfalls that beset the pathway—literally the pillow—of the Speaker. The free fight on the floor of the House round Gladstone's second Home Rule Bill flashed forth in Committee. News of the fray was brought to the Speaker, who, in what seemed safe prospect of a couple of hours' interval before, the Committee stage concluded, he would be called upon to receive Report of the Bill, lay down in his dressing gown peradventure to sleep. He was disturbed by a hurried messenger summoning him to the House. In hasty progress thither he could pick up no intelligent account of what had happened. Clearly there had been a row. But what they fought each other for Mr. Peel could no more make out than could old Caspar in connexion with another pitched battle. He took the chair in absolute ignorance of the incidents of the previous three-quarters of an hour, a condition of which he adroitly took advantage by declining to give judgment upon any point raised thereon.

Mr. Gully was never faced by anything quite so bad

as the June fight of twelve years ago. But he has had his "scenes." After all, riotous conduct in the House, whether individual or concerted, is not the most difficult matter the Speaker has to contend with. Under the new Rules—the very latest was effectively invoked by the Deputy-Speaker in the Lyttelton row—authority is armed *cap-à-pie*. It is on points of order suddenly sprung, demanding instant settlement, that the mettle of a Speaker is tried. One does not remember a case within the last ten years that Mr. Gully's, thus assayed, has not rung true. At the outset, from natural anxiety to vindicate himself, he was apt to buttress his judgment with explanations and reasons. That was a mistake he speedily recognized, acquiring the better, briefer manner.

Supplementary Questions.

One conspicuous service he rendered in the House will, the precedent established, permanently remain. He, with quite exceptional but necessary sharpness, cut short the pernicious practice of supplementary questions. When he came to the chair no Irish member with a shade of self-respect, or a pulsation of patriotism, would think of receiving a Ministerial answer to a printed question without following it up by a series of arguments or contradictions ill disguised behind the note of interrogation. "Arising out of that answer," one would say. Then came a brief speech, further reply from the Treasury Bench, the Irish member up again with the formula, "Arising out of that answer, Mr. Speaker, may I ask the right hon. gentleman——" Mr. Gully firmly answered, "No, you may not," with result that many precious hours of the session were saved for public business, and the danger of outburst of angry feeling following on disputation was avoided.

Rooted customs die hard. We still at question

time hear the insinuating phrase prefacing a supplementary question. Only the other day an Irish member hotly jumping up, tumbling over himself in his hurry, began, "Arising out of the answer the right hon. gentleman has not given, Mr. Speaker, may I ask——"

Here inquiry was interrupted by a burst of laughter that made its conclusion inaudible.

June 8. Election of Speaker.

The House of Commons met to-day without a Speaker in the chair. Mr. Gully has gone and Mr. Lowther has not yet come into his inheritance. Attired in ordinary morning dress, he entered with the flood of members, taking his seat at the corner of the second bench behind that already crowded with Ministers. Near him sat Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and next Sir William Hart Dyke.

There were other notable absences consequent on the interregnum. There being no Speaker in existence, there was no chaplain and no prayers. Nor was the mace on the table. It rested on the brackets to the front of the table, where it is placed when the House goes into committee. Meanwhile Sir Courtenay Ilbert, Clerk of the House, without presuming to preside, directed the proceedings. Sharply on the stroke of two o'clock he rose, and dumbly pointed his forefinger at Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. This was the recognized signal for that right hon. gentleman to rise and submit the resolution with which he was charged that Mr. James W. Lowther should take the chair as Speaker. In the ordinary course of procedure the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees, calling upon a member to continue the debate, addresses him by name, the sole departure from the custom whereby members are addressed or alluded to by the name of their constituency. But the Clerk of the House may not officially address a member, whether by his own

name or by that of his constituency. He dare only dumbly point at him.

Mr. Lowther Proposed.

Sir Michael, rising in response to the signal, was greeted with a hearty cheer from a House crowded in every part. A throng who could not obtain seats stood at the bar. Others lined the galleries that flank the chamber. The strangers' galleries were crammed, about a dozen peers surveying the scene from their gallery.

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach applied himself to his graceful task with unusual energy. He effectively disposed of the objection taken in some quarters that there is no precedent for a Chairman of Committees being promoted to the Speaker's chair. He showed how that condition, as affording the House an opportunity of judging of the capacity of a possible Speaker, rather than being a drawback is a distinctive advantage. Amid loud cheers he paid a tribute to the qualities of never-failing good sense, imperturbable temper, and intimate knowledge of Parliamentary rules displayed by Mr. Lowther in the Chair of Committees. Sir William Hart-Dyke seconded the motion in a speech somewhat extended in length by desire to do justice to his theme.

The Speaker Elect.

Mr. Lowther on rising was hailed with a prolonged and hearty cheer that eloquently testified to the unanimity of approval of Mr. Balfour's selection of a successor to Mr. Gully. He admitted that he could not, in addition to his catalogue of imperfections for the high post to which he was called, plead lack of experience. During his ten years' occupancy of the chair at the table he had learned that there was an even more difficult position—the Speaker's Chair. Higher qualities, fuller capacity, were required to grapple with the difficulties that environed it. His conduct as Chairman of Committees, and he might say

his character, were well known to the House. If, after ten years' experience of him, it pleased the House to call him to the higher post, he would place at its disposal the best of his ability, the whole of his strength, and what health might be given to him to carry on its work. Yielding to no man in respect and reverence for the independence, the privileges, and the traditions of the House, he would do his uttermost to maintain them intact as he received them from the hands of his predecessor.

This said, the Speaker Elect, taking an arm of his proposer and seconder, achieved the difficult passage between the Treasury Bench and the table on his way to the chair. Standing on its steps, he acknowledged the honour paid him, and expressed the hope that nothing he might do in the chair would forfeit the trust and confidence bestowed upon him. It would be his earnest endeavour to follow and emulate the example of his illustrious predecessors.

In the Chair.

Seating himself in the chair, the Serjeant-at-Arms advanced and with low reverence removing the mace from the brackets, placed it on the table. The Prime Minister, addressing Mr. Lowther, as "Mr. Speaker Elect," offered his congratulations on the highest honour it was in the power of the House to bestow or of a member to receive. For ten years the House had watched the Speaker Elect doing his duty in the Chair of Committees. That their judgment was favourable found conclusive proof in the unanimous election to the Speaker's chair.

C.-B. created momentary consternation by addressing the Speaker Elect as "Mr. Deputy Speaker." This slip corrected, he, in a few excellently chosen sentences, congratulated the new Speaker and declared the absolute belief of himself and his political friends in his impartiality, his discretion, and his wise conduct

of the business of the House. Amid general cheering he promised "our best support" to Mr. Lowther in his new position.

On the motion of the Prime Minister, it was agreed that on Tuesday the 20th inst. the House shall present the Speaker Elect for royal approval in the House of Lords. Thereupon the House adjourned for the Whitsun holidays.

June 20. Not too Old at Seventy.

Glancing along the Front Opposition Benches in both Houses, and speculating on the material supplied for the next Government, one is struck by the preponderance of men who have passed what in other branches of the public service is regarded as the age limit. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, whose succession to the Premiership seems assured, is sixty-nine. His only possible competitor, Lord Spencer, is seventy. The Duke of Devonshire, who has on the fiscal question returned to the Liberal fold, is seventy-two. Others approaching the psalmist's limit of labour with sorrow are Lord Ripon, Sir Henry Fowler, Mr. John Morley, and Mr. Bryce.

As for Mr. Hemphill, the date of his birth has disappeared from record open to public reference. According to his light-hearted countrymen below the gangway, it approximates to that of the Act of Union.

It seems something of a paradox that, whilst a man is disqualified by his sixty years' sojourn in the wilderness from remaining at his post, high or low, at the War Office, the Admiralty, the Civil Service, or the Post Office, one is never too old to be at the top of these several trees.

Their Longest Stride.

It is, of course, no new thing for statesmen not only to remain in harness after passing the three-score-years limit of age, but then or later to

achieve their longest stride to fame. Disraeli was sixty-four when he first became Premier. Ten years later, after an interval of strenuous life, he brought peace with honour from Berlin. Palmerston was seventy-one when he became Prime Minister. Mr. Gladstone carried his Home Rule Bill through the House of Commons with the added weight of eighty-four years on his shoulders. Mr. Chamberlain, still going strong, was sixty-seven when he undertook the herculean task of converting Free Trade England into a Protectionist country. To-day, approaching his seventieth year, he is cheerfully and confidently looking forward to carrying legislation on the subject, when, a Liberal Government coming in in the summer of next year, they shall have lived their life and made room again for their betters. These are striking instances of the invulnerability of great statesmen to the encroachment of age.

All the same, it is a little embarrassing for whomsoever shall form the next Liberal Administration to have so many elderly gentlemen on his hands.

July 13. A Grand Old Peer.

To the nation the death of Lord Salisbury was a grievous calamity. To the House of Lords it was an irreparable blow. It removed the last but one of the Peers whose personality fascinated the Assembly. The other (Lord Rosebery) sits on the Opposition benches.

The Earl of Wemyss comes nowhere near the level of the late Lord Salisbury. Yet in his way—quite another way—he is personally interesting. Born three years after Waterloo was fought, he, in his eighty-second year, incidentally married a second time. He has been in the House of Lords these twenty-two years. His upright lithe figure, his mobile countenance, his free gestures, show little variation from his aggressive manner during a long term in the Commons. We

get a peep at him in Mr. Frederick Leveson-Gower's charming *Recollections of By-gone Years*. Sixty-eight years ago Lord Wemyss, then Frank Charteris, was a gentleman commoner at Christ Church. The boy being father to the man, he habitually "cheeked" the Dean, as in the last decade of the century he defied the Premier. He patronized young Leveson-Gower, devising a scheme whereby he was able at dinner time surreptitiously to pass to his junior (by one year) remnants of the richer dishes provided for the Commoners.

He excited the curiosity of the great Lady Holland, who commanded Leveson-Gower to take him to Holland House. When the two lads were leaving, Lady Holland whispered in her older friend's ear, "Never mind, my dear Frederick, good looks are not everything in this world."

A nice, kind, hospitable thing to say to a boy. It has evidently rankled these sixty years in Leveson-Gower's otherwise tranquil breast.

Lord Elcho in the Commons.

He may be consoled with the assurance that when Frank Charteris, blossomed into Lord Elcho, reached the House of Commons he was accustomed to find his frequent intervention in debate impartially howled down. Twenty-five years ago, it being a period at which a new fashion of finding water was in vogue, it was said of Lord Elcho, "When on his legs he is an Abyssinian well in respect of fluency; only it is the House that is bored." Heavily humorous, weakly witty, audaciously illogical, he was accustomed to carry personal references nearer the verge of positive rudeness than did Bernal Osborne in his prime. During his last years in the Commons, his favourite place, before he was ousted by the Fourth Party, was the corner seat below the gangway to the left of the Speaker. He had a trick of rolling up a copy of the Orders of the Day in the form of a baton, with the

waving of which he enforced the pleasant nothingnesses of his speech.

Transplanted to the Upper House, the Earl of Wemyss does not carry more weight in debate than did Lord Elcho in the Commons. But he is a welcome innovation on its immobility. The late Lord Coleridge once described his sensations when making his maiden speech in the Lords as akin to those of a man addressing the tombstones in a churchyard on a moonlit midnight. When on his legs Lord Wemyss' mind is free from solemnities of that kind. With characteristic shrewdness he finds his platform on the cross benches, whence he can command a view, sometimes the attention, of members on both sides. Amongst other attractions to one brought up in the Scottish Kirk the structure of the cross benches has something in common with a roomy pulpit. Standing by the second bench, Lord Wemyss may, as the spirit moves him, walk a pace to the right or left, anon leaning on the rail of the front bench to shake a warning forefinger at the congregation. *Per contra*, there is the drawback that the corner of the front cross bench is the accustomed seat of an illustrious personage. One night, whilst His Majesty was still Prince of Wales, Lord

A Grand Old Peer.

Wemyss, wrought to highest pitch of excitement by his own eloquence, brought a gesticulatory arm in rough contact with the royal hat.

Eighty-seven. In his eighty-seventh year Lord Wemyss has this session displayed unflagging energy in Parliamentary debate. He has had more than one field-night all to himself. His method of approaching debate is properly commensurate in its deliberativeness with the importance of the occasion. He places on the Paper notices of a motion for "an early day." When the constitutional lethargy of noble lords may be supposed to be stirred by curiosity, a day is fixed. But it does not necessarily follow that the event will thereupon take place. Once, whilst Lord Salisbury was still with us, these processes gone through, and the motion, called on by the clerk at the table, Lord Wemyss rose and, with dramatic sweep of his arm, pointed to the empty place of the Prime Minister. He really could not, he told the disappointed Peers, deliver his address in the absence of the Prime Minister. Nor did he.

Wayward, wilful, a boy in spirits whilst almost a nonogenarian in years, Lord Wemyss varies the dull docorum of the House of Lords with welcome flashes of aurora borealic light. In him, in spite of Coleridge's musical lament, Youth and Age still dwell together.

> Life is but Thought: so think I will
> That Youth and I are housemates still.

Earl Wemyss at eighty-seven realizes the fond fancy of the poet.

Aug. 2. The Butler Report. Just when the fiscal question threatened fresh eruption on a vote of censure, the Butler Committee's Report explodes, blowing out of sight all other topics of public or political interest. Not since disclosures of Ministerial inepti-

tude and administrative inefficiency were made in the report of the War Commission, has the mind of the public been so deeply stirred as by the revelations forthcoming in the Butler Report. Perhaps the outcry is not so loud. People have got past the stage of acute surprise at discovering that fifty years after the Crimean war the British War Office is administered upon the principles that made possible such things as were narrated to the War Commission. The state of partially dumb despair that follows on the new revelations is even more pathetic. In brief, the situation seems irremediable, hopeless.

Humanity [staggered.

It is the duty of the Opposition to oppose, and its leaders have been quick to seize the opportunity of hammering home the responsibility of the Government for what has cost the country millions of pounds and, even more bitter result, has placed it in an ignominious position in the eyes of the world. But the question is one of national concern, involving the whole administration of a department upon which the safety of the empire largely depends. This view of the situation is accepted by the principal journals accustomed through thick and thin to support Mr. Balfour's Government. The *Times* in particular has done a public service by devoting considerable portion of its space to extracts from the evidence given before the Butler Commission. They read more like quotations from the most grimly humorous Gilbert and Sullivan opera than what they actually are—matter-of-fact records of the daily business transactions carried on under the authority of the War Office.

Aug. 4. Ambiguous.

Apropos to procedure on the Redistribution Resolutions, some one drew attention to the alleged fact that King's Lynn has a population of only 20,000. Instantly the champion of the borough was on his feet with inquiry addressed to the

Prime Minister : " Is the right hon. gentleman aware that ever since I have been member for King's Lynn the population has annually increased ? "

The almost paternal benignancy with which Mr. Bowles invested this remark was responded to by the heartiest peal of laughter heard in the House this session. Why they should laugh, Père Bowles, surveying the jubilant throng with puzzled countenance, could not make out.

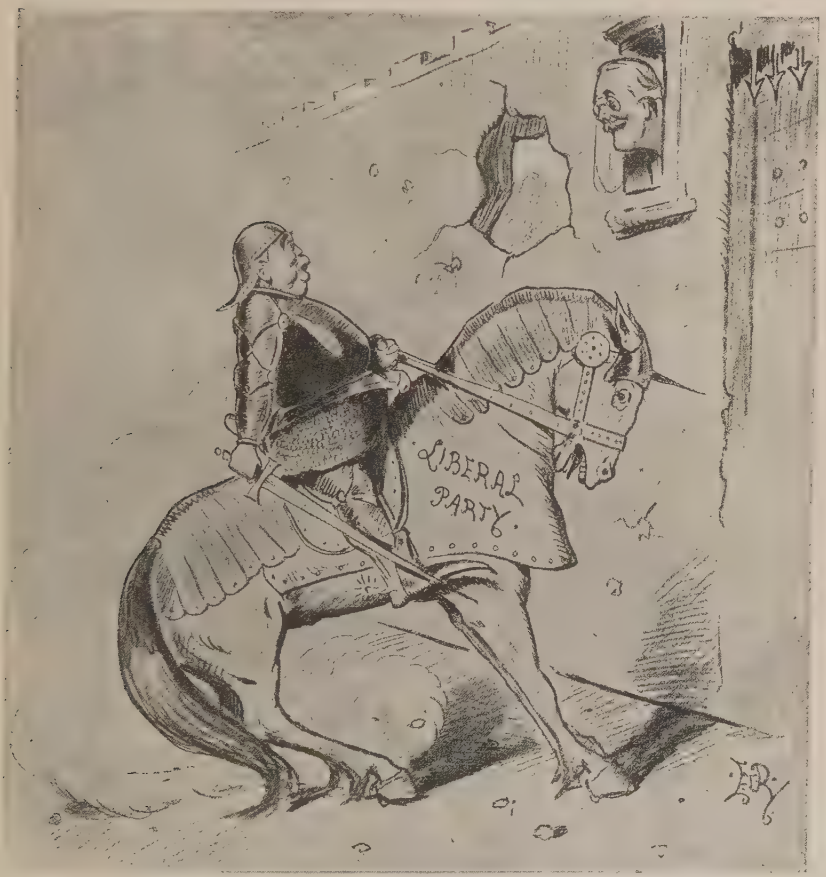
Aug. 11. [Prorogation.

The most striking thing about the session is that it should have closed to-day. There are few members among the crowd who met in February who would have put their money on the duration of the session to such a date. The main point of divided opinion on the opening day was whether Dissolution would come before Easter or whether by determined effort and good luck the end might be postponed till Whitsuntide. That what is deemed the impossible should have happened is due directly and solely to the stubborn will of one man. None but Mr. Arthur Balfour would have carried the Government through the past session and, it may be added, in the peculiar circumstances of the case, none other would have desired to prolong its life. The apparently impossible, the certainly difficult has for him irresistible attraction. One of his keenest delights is the shocking of persons tied and bound by conventional chains. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman is a personage who in this respect wields remarkable influence over him. When on the Address, the Leader of the Opposition mounted his war horse, rode up to the Ministerial fortress and demanded surrender, Mr. Balfour popped his head out of the portal and provokingly smiled.

Mr. Balfour.

Study of this remarkable character is made more interesting by knowledge of its earlier development. Whilst still a young man, the

Prime Minister of to-day had no leaning towards politics or Parliamentary life. His impulse was to scorn them as tedious, occasionally sordid.



"Popped his head out of the Portal."

Parliamentary Apprenticeship.

Nor did he rapidly overcome distaste and lack of sympathy. Attracted by the audacity and originality of the Fourth Party, he, six years later, joined it, or, to be more precise, permitted

himself to be attached to it. His attendance on debate and his services to the party were fitful. It was not till he had sat in the House for thirteen years that he discovered his vocation and revealed his real character to a surprised assembly. The Irish members laughed scornfully when he was appointed Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. They surveyed his fragile figure, looked upon his smiling countenance, took note of his unfailing courtesy, and promised themselves the pleasure of doubling him up in two months. Doubling up took place. But when, at the end of four years, Mr. Balfour retired from the Irish Office his figure was alertly erect.

Premier.

During his Premiership, more especially through the session closed to-day, Mr. Balfour has displayed the same indomitable purpose, the same unfeigned inability to recognize apparent defeat that first amazed, then cowed, finally won the admiration of, the Irish members in Parnell's day. It must be admitted that up till May, 1903, he trod the primrose path of Premiership. Popular in the country and the House, facing a disorganized Opposition with well disciplined phalanx, he was autocrat of the position. The starting of the Fiscal Reform campaign changed the face of all things. Surveying a suddenly riven party, he set himself the task of preventing widening of the fissure. Whether the course he adopted was the wisest is not here discussed. Once taken, it has been followed with a dexterity and a resource illimitable in their range, unfailing in their fertility.

For two full sessions and the greater part of a third, the Opposition on the front bench and the back benches below the gangway have night after night attempted to extract from the Premier a statement of his precise relations with Mr. Chamberlain on the fiscal question,

and of his intentions in dealing with it on further development. He has answered at question time, made speeches in successive debates, and has never committed himself by an embarrassing admission. That may not be the highest form of statesmanship. As an intellectual feat it is unparalleled.

The incessant labour of official life, the constant worry of leadership, have during the past six weeks obviously told upon the Premier's light heart and dauntless courage. Like Mr. Gladstone in his prime he is endowed with the priceless gift of speedily recovering from the effects of overwork or momentary disaster. But close attendance on a Parliamentary session of six months tells upon the strongest man, even when the daily task is not augumented by office work. In debate on the second reading of the Appropriation Bill foes and friends alike delighted in discovering the Premier quite in his old form. His badinage of the Opposition was so rich in humour, so unimpeachable in tone, that the objects of the raillery enjoyed it almost as much as did the Ministerialists.

Adroit.

Its exceeding deftness obscured its surpassing cleverness. Mr. Asquith had just delivered a damaging speech. Some Ministers, Mr. Gladstone for example, would have painstakingly devoted themselves to answering it point by point. Mr. Balfour may have had a complete answer to the indictment. If so he reserved it for another occasion. For the moment he thought it the more judicious tactics to divert attention from alleged Ministerial laches. Accordingly, declining to answer the challenge as to what Ministers would do in certain contingencies, he playfully prodded the leaders of the Opposition in the ribs and asked what they would do about Home Rule in a certain contemplated contingency.

Serious-minded persons will say this was not debate, was not worthy a responsible Minister. It suffices here to note that it effected its designed purpose of turning discussion out of the deep channel Mr. Asquith laboriously dug for it, a course to which it did not return.

Rumours current of impending Dissolution.

Doorkeeper at Downing Street to Friendly Undertakers: "You're too soon, gentlemen. He's good for another session.

CALENDAR.

*Bills marked thus * are Government Bills.*

FEBRUARY.

14. *Tues.*—Parliament opened by the King in person. H. M. Speech. Address. Debate adjourned.
15. *Wed.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Debate adjourned.
16. *Thur.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Fiscal Question, *Mr. Asquith.* Division—For, 248. Against, 311. Debate adjourned.
17. *Fri.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Transvaal Labour Ordinance, *Dr. Macnamara.* Division—For, 214. Against, 275. Debate adjourned.
20. *Mon.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Government of Ireland, *Mr. John Redmond.* Debate adjourned.
21. *Tues.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Government of Ireland, *Mr. John Redmond.* Division—For, 236. Against, 286. Debate adjourned.
22. *Wed.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Sir Antony Macdonnell, *Mr. John Redmond.* Division—For, 223. Against, 265. Debate adjourned.
23. *Thur.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Efficiency of the Army, *Captain Norton.* Division—For, 207. Against, 254. Debate adjourned.
24. *Fri.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Agricultural Industry, *Mr. Channing.* Division—For, 165. Against, 241. Debate adjourned.
27. *Mon.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Ottoman Empire, *Mr. Stevenson.* Amendment, Brussels Sugar Convention, *Mr. Kearley.* Debate adjourned.
28. *Tues.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, Brussels Sugar Convention, *Mr. Kearley.* Division—For, 211. Against, 276. Debate adjourned.

MARCH.

1. *Wed.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment, National Expenditure, *Mr. Buchanan.* Division—For, 201. Against, 250. Amendment, Labourers (Ireland), *Captain Donelan.* Division—For, 184. Against, 228. Main Question—For, 235. Against, 175. Address agreed to.
2. *Thur.*—Supply: Army (Supplementary) Estimates, 1904–5 (Somaliland).
6. *Mon.*—Supply: Navy Estimates, 1905–6.
South Africa (Appointment of High Commissioner). Motion for adjournment, *Mr. MacNeill.* Division—For, 164. Against, 220.
7. *Tues.*—Supply: Navy Estimates, 1905–6.
Army (Supplementary) Estimates, 1904–5 (Somaliland).
8. *Wed.*—Army (Supplementary) Estimates, 1904–5 (Somaliland). Division—For, 273. Against, 219.
Preferential Trading with the Colonies. *Mr. Churchill.* Division—For, 302. Against, 260.
* Education (Scotland) Bill. First Reading.
9. *Thur.*—Civil Services (Supplementary) Estimates, 1904–5.
10. *Fri.*—Trade Unions and Trade Disputes Bill. Second Reading. Bill committed.
13. *Mon.*—Supply: FIRST allotted day. Navy Estimates, 1905–6.
14. *Tues.*—Supply: Navy Estimates, 1905–6.
15. *Wed.*—Business of the House. Supply, etc.
16. *Thur.*—Business of the House. Supply, etc.
17. *Fri.*—Coal Mines Employment Bill. Second Reading.
20. *Mon.*—Supply: SECOND allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1905–6. Vote on Account.
21. *Tues.*—Civil Services (Supplementary) Estimates, 1904–5.
22. *Wed.*—Civil Services, etc., 1905–6. Vote on Account.
23. *Thur.*—Army (Supplementary) Estimate, 1904–5 (Somaliland).
Navy Estimates, 1905–6.
24. *Fri.*—Town Tenants (Ireland) Bill. Bill committed.
27. *Mon.*—* Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. Bill committed.
28. *Tues.*—Army Estimates, 1905–6.
29. *Wed.*—Army Estimates, 1905–6.

30. *Thur.*—Army Estimates, 1905–6.
*Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill, Third Reading. Division—For, 248. Against, 190.
31. *Fri.*—Local Authorities (Qualification of Women) Bill Second Reading.

APRIL.

3. *Mon.*—Supply: THIRD allotted day. Army Estimates, 1905–6.
4. *Tues.*—Supply: Army Estimates, 1905–6.
5. *Wed.*—Supply: Army Estimates, 1905–6.
6. *Thur.*—Supply: FOURTH allotted day. Army Estimates, 1905–6.
7. *Fri.*—Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill. Second Reading. Bill committed.
10. *Mon.*—Ways and Means. Financial Statement, *Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*
12. *Wed.*—* Army (Annual) Bill. Third Reading.
13. *Thur.*—London Port and Docks Commission Bill. Second Reading. Division—For, 123. Against, 191.
14. *Fri.*—Land Values (Assessment and Rating) Bill. Second Reading.
17. *Mon.*—* Agricultural Rates Act, 1896, etc., Continuance Bill. Second Reading. Bill committed.
18. *Tues.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates.
* Unemployed Workmen Bill. First Reading.
* Aliens Bill. First Reading.
Adjournment until Tuesday, 2nd May.

MAY.

2. *Tues.*—* Aliens Bill. Second Reading. Bill committed.
4. *Thur.*—Supply: FIFTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1905–6.
8. *Mon.*—* Education (Scotland) Bill. Second Reading. Bill committed.
9. *Tues.*—Government of Ireland. *Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.* Division—For, 252. Against, 315.
10. *Wed.*—* Agricultural Rates Act, 1896, etc. Continuance Bill. In Committee.
11. *Thur.*—Supply: SIXTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1905–6.

12. *Fri.*—* Finance Bill. Second Reading. Debate adjourned.
15. *Mon.*—* Finance Bill. Debate adjourned.
16. *Tues.*—* Finance Bill. Second Reading. Bill Committed.
17. *Wed.*—* Agricultural Rates Act, 1896, etc., Continuance Bill. In Committee.
18. *Thur.*—Supply: SEVENTH allotted day. Navy Estimates, 1905–6.
19. *Fri.*—Land Values Taxation (Scotland) Bill. Second Reading. Bill committed.
22. *Mon.*—* Finance Bill. In Committee.
23. *Tues.*—* Finance Bill. In Committee
24. *Wed.*—* Finance Bill. In Committee.
25. *Thur.*—Supply: EIGHTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1905–6.
26. *Fri.*—Trades Union and Trades Disputes Bill. Bill withdrawn.
29. *Mon.*—* Finance Bill. In Committee.
30. *Tues.*—* Finance Bill. In Committee.
31. *Wed.*—* Agricultural Rates Act, 1896, etc., Continuance Bill. Third Reading.

JUNE.

1. *Thur.*—Supply: NINTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1905–6.
5. *Mon.*—* Finance Bill. Third Reading.
6. *Tues.*—Supply: TENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc. 1905–6.
7. *Wed.*—Retirement of the Speaker.
8. *Thur.*—Mr. J. W. Lowther elected Speaker.
Adjournment until Tuesday, 20th inst.
20. *Tues.*—* Unemployed Workmen Bill. Second Reading. Bill committed.
21. *Wed.*—Supply: Civil Services and Revenue Departments' Estimates, 1905–6.
22. *Thur.*—Supply: ELEVENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1905–6.
23. *Fri.*—* Consolidated Fund (No. 2) Bill. Second Reading.
26. *Mon.*—South Africa (Sales and Re-funds). *Sir Robert Reid.* Division—For, 255. Against, 329.
27. *Tues.*—* Aliens Bill. In Committee.
28. *Wed.*—* Aliens Bill. In Committee.

29. *Thur.*—Supply: TWELFTH allotted day. Navy Estimates, 1905–6.
30. *Fri.*—Public Trustee and Executor Bill. Debate adjourned.

JULY.

3. *Mon.*—* Aliens Bill. In Committee.
   * Consolidated Fund (No. 2) Bill. In Committee.
4. *Tues.*—* Churches (Scotland) Bill. Debate adjourned.
5. *Wed.*—* Aliens Bill. In Committee.
6. *Thur.*—Supply: THIRTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1905–6.
   * Consolidated Fund (No. 2) Bill. Third Reading.
7. *Fri.*—Public Trustee and Executor Bill. Debate adjourned.
10. *Mon.*—* Aliens Bill. In Committee.
11. *Tues.*—* Aliens Bill. Bill reported as amended.
12. *Wed.*—* Churches (Scotland) Bill. Second Reading.
13. *Thur.*—Supply: FOURTEENTH allotted day. Army Estimates, 1905–6.
14. *Fri.*—* Education (Scotland) Bill. In Committee.
17. *Mon.*—* Aliens Bill. In Committee.
18. *Tues.*—* Churches (Scotland) Bill. In Committee.
    * Aliens Bill. In Committee.
19. *Wed.*—* Churches (Scotland) Bill. In Committee.
    * Aliens Bill. Third Reading.
20. *Thur.*—Supply: FIFTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1905–6.
21. *Fri.*—* Churches (Scotland) Bill. Bill reported as amended.
25. *Tues.*—Supply: SIXTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1905–6.
26. *Wed.*—* Churches (Scotland) Bill. Third Reading.
27. *Thur.*—Supply: SEVENTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1905–6.
31. *Mon.*—Supply: Civil Services etc., 1905–6.

AUGUST.

1. *Tues.*—Supply: EIGHTEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1905–6.
2. *Wed.*—Supply: NINETEENTH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1905–6.

3. *Thur.*—Supply : TWENTIETH allotted day. Civil Services, etc., 1905–6.
4. *Fri.*—* Unemployed Workmen Bill. In Committee.
7. *Mon.*—* Unemployed Workmen Bill. Third Reading.
   * Education (Scotland) Bill. Bill withdrawn.
8. *Tues.*—* Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Second Reading.
9. *Wed.*—* Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. In Committee.
10. *Thur.*—* Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill. Third Reading.
11. *Fri.*—H. M. Speech. Prorogation.

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